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Psyche,

WITH

OTHER POEMS.

BY THE LATE MRS. HENRY TIGHE.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1811.

T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

TO THE READER.

TO possess strong feelings and amiable affections, and to express them with a nice discrimination, has been the attribute of many female writers; some of whom have also participated with the author of Psyche in the unhappy lot of a suffering frame and a premature death. Had the publication of her poems served only as the fleeting record of such a destiny, and as a monument

of private regret, her friends would not have thought themselves justified in displaying them to the world. But when a writer intimately acquainted with classical literature, and guided by a taste for real excellence, has delivered in polished language such sentiments as can tend only to encourage and improve the best sensations of the human heart, then it becomes a sort of duty in surviving friends no longer to withhold from the public such precious relics.

The copies of Psyche printed for the author in her lifetime were borrowed with avidity, and read with delight; and the partiality of friends has been already outstripped by the applause of admirers.

The smaller poems which complete this volume may perhaps stand in need of that indulgence which a posthumous work always demands when it did not receive the correction of the author. They have been selected from a larger number of poems, which were the occasional effusion of her thoughts, or productions of her leisure, but not originally intended or pointed out by herself for publication.

Psyche;

OR,

THE LEGEND OF LOVE.

——Castos docet et pios amores.

MARTIAL.

PREFACE

TO THE

COPIES OF PSYCHE WHICH WERE PRINTED IN 1805.

THE author, who dismisses to the public the darling object of his solitary cares, must be prepared to consider, with some degree of indifference, the various reception it may then meet. But from those who write only for the more interested eye of friendship,

no such indifference can be expected. I may therefore be forgiven the egotism which makes me anxious to recommend to my readers the tale with which I present them, while I endeavour to excuse in it all other defects but that, which I fear cannot be excused—the deficiency of genius.

In making choice of the beautiful ancient allegory of Love and the Soul, I had some fears lest my subject might be condemned by the frown of severer moralists; however, I hope that if such have the condescension to read through a poem which they may perhaps think too long, they will yet do me the justice to allow, that I have only pictured innocent love, such love as the

purest bosom might confess. " Les jeunes femmes, qui ne veulent point paroitre coquettes, ne doivent jamais parler de l'amour comme d'une chose ou elles puissent avoir part," says La Rochefoucault; but I believe it is only the false refinement of the most profligate court which could give birth to such a sentiment, and that love will always be found to have had the strongest influence where the morals have been the purest.

I much regret that I can have no hope of affording any pleasure to some, whose opinion I highly respect, whom I have heard profess themselves ever disgusted by the veiled form of allegory, and yet

> Are not the choicest fables of the poets,
> Who were the fountains and first springs of wisdom,
> Wrapt in perplexed allegories?

But if I have not been able to resist the seductions of the mysterious fair, who perhaps never appears captivating except in the eyes of her own poet, I have however remembered that my verse cannot be worth much consideration, and have therefore endeavoured to let my meaning be perfectly obvious. The same reason has deterred me from using the obsolete words which are to be found in Spenser and his imitators.

Although I cannot give up the excellence of my subject, I am yet ready to own that

the stanza which I have chosen has many disadvantages, and that it may, perhaps, be as tiresome to the reader as it was difficult to the author. The frequent recurrence of the same rhymes is by no means well adapted to the English language; and I know not whether I have a right to offer as an apology the restraint which I had imposed upon myself of strictly adhering to the stanza which my partiality for Spenser first inclined me to adopt.

The loves of Cupid and Psyche have long been a favourite subject for poetical allusion, and are well known as related by Apuleius: to him I am indebted for the outline of my tale in the two first cantos;

but even there the model is not closely copied, and I have taken nothing from Moliere, La Fontaine, Du Moustier, or Marino. I have seen no imitations of Apuleius except by those authors; nor do I know that the story of Psyche has any other original.

I should willingly acknowledge with gratitude those authors who have, perhaps, supplied me with many expressions and ideas; but if I have subjected myself to the charge of plagiarism, it has been by adopting the words or images which floated upon my mind, without accurately examining, or being indeed able to distinguish, whether I owed them to my memory or my imagination,

Si id est peccatum, peccatum imprudentia est
Poetæ, non qui furtum facere studuerit.

TERENTIUS.

And when I confess that all I have is but the fruit of a much indulged taste for that particular style of reading, let me be excused if I do not investigate and acknowledge more strictly each separate obligation.

M. T.

SONNET

ADDRESSED

TO MY MOTHER.

Oh, thou! whose tender smile most partially
Hath ever blessed thy child: to thee belong
The graces which adorn my first wild song,
If aught of grace it knows: nor thou deny
Thine ever prompt attention to supply.
But let me lead thy willing ear along,
Where virtuous love still bids the strain prolong
His innocent applause; since from thine eye
The beams of love first charmed my infant breast,
And from thy lip Affection's soothing voice
That eloquence of tenderness expressed,
Which still my grateful heart confessed divine:
Oh! ever may its accents sweet rejoice
The soul which loves to own whate'er it has is thine!

Chi pensa quanto un bel desio d'amore
Un spirto pellegrin tenga sublime;
Non vorria non averne acceso il core;
Chi gusta quanto dolce il creder sia
Solo esser caro a chi sola n'e cara,
Regna in un stato a cui null' altro e pria.

Ariosto, Eleg. xii.

Psyche.

ARGUMENT.

Proem—Psyche introduced—Her royal origin—Envy of Venus—Her instructions to Cupid—The island of Pleasure—The fountains of Joy and of Sorrow—The appearance of Love—Psyche asleep—Mutually wounded—Psyche reveals her dream to her Mother—The Oracle consulted—Psyche abandoned on the Rock by its decree—Carried by Zephyrs to the island of Pleasure—The Palace of Love—Banquet of Love—Marriage of Cupid and Psyche—Psyche's daily solitude—Her request to her Lover—His reluctant consent.

Psyche.

Let not the rugged brow the rhymes accuse,
Which speak of gentle knights and ladies fair,
Nor scorn the lighter labours of the muse,
Who yet, for cruel battles would not dare
The low-strung chords of her weak lyre prepare:
But loves to court repose in slumbery lay,
To tell of goodly bowers and gardens rare,
Of gentle blandishments and amorous play,
And all the lore of love, in courtly verse essay.

And ye whose gentle hearts in thraldom held
The power of mighty Love already own,
When you the pains and dangers have beheld,
Which erst your lord hath for his Psyche known,
For all your sorrows this may well atone,
That he you serve the same hath suffered;
And sure, your fond applause the tale will crown
In which your own distress is pictured,
And all that weary way which you yourselves must tread.

Most sweet would to my soul the hope appear,
That sorrow in my verse a charm might find,
To smooth the brow long bent with bitter cheer,
Some short distraction to the joyless mind
Which grief, with heavy chain, hath fast confined
To sad remembrance of its happier state;
For to myself I ask no boon more kind
Than power another's woes to mitigate,
And that soft soothing art which anguish can abate.

And thou, sweet sprite, whose sway doth far extend,
Smile on the mean historian of thy fame!
My heart in each distress and fear befriend,
Nor ever let it feel a fiercer flame
Than innocence may cherish free from blame,
And hope may nurse, and sympathy may own;
For, as thy rights I never would disclaim,
But true allegiance offered to thy throne,
So may I love but one, by one beloved alone.

That anxious torture may I never feel,
Which, doubtful, watches o'er a wandering heart.
Oh! who that bitter torment can reveal,
Or tell the pining anguish of that smart!
In those affections may I ne'er have part,
Which easily transferred can learn to rove:
No, dearest Cupid! when I feel thy dart,
For thy sweet Psyche's sake may no false love
The tenderness I prize lightly from me remove!

CANTO I.

Much wearied with her long and dreary way,
And now with toil and sorrow well nigh spent,
Of sad regret and wasting grief the prey,
Fair Psyche through untrodden forests went,
To lone shades uttering oft a vain lament.
And oft in hopeless silence sighing deep,
As she her fatal error did repent,
While dear remembrance bade her ever weep,
And her pale cheek in ceaseless showers of sorrow steep.

'Mid the thick covert of that woodland shade,
A flowery bank there lay undressed by art,
But of the mossy turf spontaneous made;
Here the young branches shot their arms athwart,
And wove the bower so thick in every part,
That the fierce beams of Phœbus glancing strong
Could never through the leaves their fury dart;
But the sweet creeping shrubs that round it throng,
Their loving fragrance mix, and trail their flowers along.

And close beside a little fountain played,
Which through the trembling leaves all joyous shone,
And with the cheerful birds sweet music made,
Kissing the surface of each polished stone
As it flowed past: sure as her favourite throne
Tranquillity might well esteem the bower,
The fresh and cool retreat have called her own,
A pleasant shelter in the sultry hour,
A refuge from the blast, and angry tempest's power.

Wooed by the soothing silence of the scene
Here Psyche stood, and looking round, lest aught
Which threatened danger near her might have been,
Awhile to rest her in that quiet spot
She laid her down, and piteously bethought
Herself on the sad changes of her fate,
Which in so short a space so much had wrought,
And now had raised her to such high estate,
And now had plunged her low in sorrow desolate.

Oh! how refreshing seemed the breathing wind
To her faint limbs! and while her snowy hands
From her fair brow her golden hair unbind,
And of her zone unloose the silken bands,
More passing bright unveiled her beauty stands;
For faultless was her form as beauty's queen,
And every winning grace that Love demands,
With mild attempered dignity was seen
Play o'er each lovely limb, and deck her angel mien.

Though solitary now, dismayed, forlorn,
Without attendant through the forest rude,
The peerless maid of royal lineage born
By many a royal youth had oft been wooed;
Low at her feet full many a prince had sued,
And homage paid unto her beauty rare;
But all their blandishments her heart withstood;
And well might mortal suitor sure despair,
Since mortal charms were none which might with hers compare.

Yet nought of insolence or haughty pride
Found ever in her gentle breast a place;
Though men her wondrous beauty deified,
And rashly deeming such celestial grace
Could never spring from any earthly race,
Lo! all forsaking Cytherea's shrine,
Her sacred altars now no more embrace,
But to fair Psyche pay those rites divine,
Which, Goddess! are thy due, and should be only thine.

But envy of her beauty's growing fame
Poisoned her sisters' hearts with secret gall,
And oft with seeming piety they blame
The worship which they justly impious call;
And oft, lest evil should their sire befal,
Besought him to forbid the erring crowd
Which hourly thronged around the regal hall,
With incense, gifts, and invocations loud,
To her whose guiltless breast, ne'er felt elation proud.

For she was timid as the wintry flower,
That, whiter than the snow it blooms among,
Droops its fair head submissive to the power
Of every angry blast which sweeps along
Sparing the lovely trembler, while the strong
Majestic tenants of the leafless wood
It levels low. But, ah! the pitying song
Must tell how, than the tempest's self more rude,
Fierce wrath and cruel hate their suppliant prey pursued.

Indignant quitting her deserted fanes,
Now Cytherea sought her favourite isle,
And there from every eye her secret pains
'Mid her thick myrtle bowers concealed awhile;
Practised no more the glance, or witching smile,
But nursed the pang she never felt before,
Of mortified disdain; then to beguile
The hours which mortal flattery soothed no more,
She various plans revolved her influence to restore.

She called her son with unaccustomed voice;
Not with those thrilling accents of delight
Which bade so oft enchanted Love rejoice,
Soft as the breezes of a summer's night:
Now choked with rage its change could Love affright;
As all to sudden discontent a prey,
Shunning the cheerful day's enlivening light,
She felt the angry power's malignant sway,
And bade her favourite boy her vengeful will obey.

Bathed in those tears which vanquish human hearts,
" Oh, son beloved!" (the suppliant goddess cried,)
" If e'er thy too indulgent mother's arts
" Subdued for thee the potent deities
" Who rule my native deep, or haunt the skies ;
" Or if to me the grateful praise be due,
" That to thy sceptre bow the great and wise,
" Now let thy fierce revenge my foe pursue,
" And let my rival scorned her vain presumption rue.

" For what to me avails my former boast
" That, fairer than the wife of Jove confest,
" I gained the prize thus basely to be lost?
" With me the world's devotion to contest
" Behold a mortal dares ; though on my breast
" Still vainly brilliant shines the magic zone.
" Yet, yet I reign : by you my wrongs redrest,
" The world with humbled Psyche soon shall own
" That Venus, beauty's queen, shall be adored alone.

" Deep let her drink of that dark, bitter spring,
" Which flows so near thy bright and crystal tide;
" Deep let her heart thy sharpest arrow sting,
" Its tempered barb in that black poison dyed.
" Let her, for whom contending princes sighed,
" Feel all the fury of thy fiercest flame
" For some base wretch to foul disgrace allied,
" Forgetful of her birth and her fair fame,
" Her honours all defiled, and sacrificed to shame."

Then, with sweet pressure of her rosy lip,
A kiss she gave bathed in ambrosial dew;
The thrilling joy he would for ever sip,
And his moist eyes in ecstasy imbrue.
But she whose soul still angry cares pursue,
Snatched from the soft caress her glowing charms;
Her vengeful will she then enforced anew,
As she in haste dismissed him from her arms,
The cruel draught to seek of anguish and alarms.

'Mid the blue waves by circling seas embraced
A chosen spot of fairest land was seen;
For there with favouring hand had Nature placed
All that could lovely make the varied scene:
Eternal Spring there spread her mantle green;
There high surrounding hills deep-wooded rose
O'er placid lakes; while marble rocks between
The fragrant shrubs their pointed heads disclose,
And balmy breathes each gale which o'er the island blows.

Pleasure had called the fertile lawns her own,
And thickly strewed them with her choicest flowers;
Amid the quiet glade her golden throne
Bright shone with lustre through o'erarching bowers:
There her fair train, the ever downy Hours,
Sport on light wing with the young Joys entwined;
While Hope delighted from her full lap showers
Blossoms, whose fragrance can the ravished mind
Inebriate with dreams of rapture unconfined.

And in the grassy centre of the isle,
Where the thick verdure spreads a damper shade,
Amid their native rocks concealed awhile,
Then o'er the plains in devious streams displayed,
Two gushing fountains rise; and thence conveyed,
Their waters through the woods and vallies play,
Visit each green recess and secret glade,
With still unmingled, still meandering way,
Nor widely wandering far, can each from other stray.

But of strange contrast are their virtues found,
And oft the lady of that isle has tried
In rocky dens and caverns under ground,
The black deformed stream in vain to hide;
Bursting all bounds her labours it defied;
Yet many a flowery sod its course conceals
Through plains where deep its silent waters glide,
Till secret ruin all corroding steals,
And every treacherous arch the hideous gulph reveals.

Forbidding every kindly prosperous growth,
Where'er it ran, a channel bleak it wore;
The gaping banks receded, as though loth
To touch the poison which disgraced their shore:
There deadly anguish pours unmixed his store
Of all the ills which sting the human breast,
The hopeless tears which past delights deplore,
Heart-gnawing jealousy which knows no rest,
And self-upbraiding shame, by stern remorse opprest.

Oh, how unlike the pure transparent stream,
Which near it bubbles o'er its golden sands!
The impeding stones with pleasant music seem
Its progress to detain from other lands;
And all its banks, inwreathed with flowery bands,
Ambrosial fragrance shed in grateful dew:
There young Desire enchanted ever stands,
Breathing delight and fragrance ever new,
And bathed in constant joys of fond affection true.

But not to mortals is it e'er allowed
To drink unmingled of that current bright;
Scarce can they taste the pleasurable flood,
Defiled by angry Fortune's envious spite;
Who from the cup of amorous delight
Dashes the sparkling draught of brilliant joy,
Till, with dull sorrow's stream despoiled quite,
No more it cheers the soul nor charms the eye,
But 'mid the poisoned bowl distrust and anguish lie.

Here Cupid tempers his unerring darts,
And in the fount of bliss delights to play;
Here mingles balmy sighs and pleasing smarts,
And here the honied draught will oft allay
With that black poison's all-polluting sway,
For wretched man. Hither, as Venus willed,
For Psyche's punishment he bent his way:
From either stream his amber vase he filled,
For her were meant the drops which grief alone distilled.

His quiver, sparkling bright with gems and gold,
From his fair plumed shoulder graceful hung,
And from its top in brilliant chords enrolled
Each little vase resplendently was slung:
Still as he flew, around him sportive clung
His frolic train of winged Zephyrs light,
Wafting the fragrance which his tresses flung:
While odours dropped from every ringlet bright,
And from his blue eyes beamed ineffable delight.

Wrapt in a cloud unseen by mortal eye,
He sought the chamber of the royal maid;
There, lulled by careless soft security,
Of the impending mischief nought afraid,
Upon her purple couch was Psyche laid,
Her radiant eyes a downy slumber sealed;
In light transparent veil alone arrayed,
Her bosom's opening charms were half revealed,
And scarce the lucid folds her polished limbs concealed

A placid smile plays o'er each roseate lip,
Sweet severed lips! while thus your pearls disclose.
That slumbering thus unconscious she may sip
The cruel presage of her future woes?
Lightly, as fall the dews upon the rose,
Upon the coral gates of that sweet cell
The fatal drops he pours; nor yet he knows,
Nor, though a God, can he presaging tell
How he himself shall mourn the ills of that sad spell!

Nor yet content, he from his quiver drew,
Sharpened with skill divine, a shining dart:
No need had he for bow, since thus too true
His hand might wound her all-exposed heart;
Yet her fair side he touched with gentlest art,
And half relenting on her beauties gazed;
Just then awaking with a sudden start
Her opening eye in humid lustre blazed,
Unseen he still remained, enchanted and amazed.

The dart which in his hand now trembling stood,
As o'er the couch he bent with ravished eye,
Drew with its daring point celestial blood
From his smooth neck's unblemished ivory:
Heedless of this, but with a pitying sigh
The evil done now anxious to repair,
He shed in haste the balmy drops of joy
O'er all the silky ringlets of her hair;
Then stretched his plumes divine, and breathed celestial air.

Unhappy Psyche! soon the latent wound
The fading roses of her cheek confess,
Her eyes bright beams, in swimming sorrows drowned,
Sparkle no more with life and happiness
Her parents fond exulting heart to bless;
She shuns adoring crowds, and seeks to hide
The pining sorrows which her soul oppress,
Till to her mother's tears no more denied,
The secret griet she owns, for which she lingering sighed.

A dream of mingled terror and delight
Still heavy hangs upon her troubled soul,
An angry form still swims before her sight,
And still the vengeful thunders seem to roll;
Still crushed to earth she feels the stern control
Of Venus unrelenting, unappeased:
The dream returns, she feels the fancied dole;
Once more the furies on her heart have seized,
But still she views the youth who all her sufferings eased.

Of wonderous beauty did the vision seem,
And in the freshest prime of youthful years;
Such at the close of her distressful dream
A graceful champion to her eyes appears;
Her loved deliverer from her foes and fears
She seems in grateful transport still to press;
Still his soft voice sounds in her ravished ears;
Dissolved in fondest tears of tenderness
His form she oft invokes her waking eyes to bless.

Nor was it quite a dream, for as she woke,
Ere heavenly mists concealed him from her eye,
One sudden transitory view she took
Of Love's most radiant bright divinity;
From the fair image never can she fly,
As still consumed with vain desire she pines;
While her fond parents heave the anxious sigh,
And to avert her fate seek holy shrines
The threatened ills to learn by auguries and signs.

And now, the royal sacrifice prepared,
The milk-white bull they to the altar lead,
Whose youth the galling yoke as yet had spared,
Now destined by the sacred knife to bleed:
When lo! with sudden spring his horns he freed,
And head-long rushed amid the frighted throng:
While from the smoke-veiled shrine such sounds proceed
As well might strike with awe the soul most strong;
And thus divinely spoke the heaven inspired tongue.

" On nuptial couch, in nuptial vest arrayed,
" On a tall rock's high summit Psyche place:
" Let all depart, and leave the fated maid
" Who never must a mortal Hymen grace:
" A winged monster of no earthly race
" Thence soon shall bear his trembling bride away;
" His power extends o'er all the bounds of space,
" And Jove himself has owned his dreaded sway,
" Whose flaming breath sheds fire, whom earth and heaven obey."

With terror, anguish, and astonishment
The oracle her wretched father hears;
Now from his brow the regal honours rent,
And now in frantic sorrow wild appears,
Nor threatened plagues, nor punishment he fears,
Refusing long the sentence to obey,
Till Psyche, trembling with submissive tears,
Bids them the sacrifice no more delay,
Prepare the funeral couch, and leave the destined prey.

Pleased by the ambiguous doom the Fates promulge,
The angry Goddess and enamoured Boy
Alike content their various hopes indulge;
He, still exploring with an anxious eye
The future prospect of uncertain joy,
Plans how the tender object of his care
He may protect from threatened misery;
Ah sanguine Love! so oft deceived, forbear
With flattering tints to paint illusive hope so fair.

But now what lamentations rend the skies!
In amaracine wreaths the virgin choir
With Io Hymen mingle funeral cries:
Lost in the sorrows of the Lydian lyre
The breathing flutes' melodious notes expire;
In sad procession pass the mournful throng
Extinguishing with tears the torches' fire,
While the mute victim weeping crowds among,
By unknown fears oppressed, moves silently along.

But on such scenes of terror and dismay
The mournful Muse delights not long to dwell;
She quits well pleased the melancholy lay,
Nor vainly seeks the parents' woes to tell:
But what to wondering Psyche then befel
When thus abandoned, let her rather say,
Who shuddering looks to see some monster fell
Approach the desert rock to seize his prey,
With cruel fangs devour, or tear her thence away.

When lo! a gentle breeze began to rise,
Breathed by obedient Zephyrs round the maid,
Fanning her bosom with its softest sighs
Awhile among her fluttering robes it strayed,
And boldly sportive latent charms displayed:
And then, as Cupid willed, with tenderest care
From the tall rock, where weeping she was laid,
With gliding motion through the yielding air
To Pleasure's blooming isle their lovely charge they bear.

On the green bosom of the turf reclined,
They lightly now the astonished virgin lay,
To placid rest they sooth her troubled mind;
Around her still with watchful care they stay,
Around her still in quiet whispers play;
Till lulling slumbers bid her eyelids close,
Veiling with silky fringe each brilliant ray,
While soft tranquillity divinely flows
O'er all her soul serene, in visions of repose.

Refreshed she rose, and all enchanted gazed
On the rare beauties of the pleasant scene.
Conspicuous far a lofty palace blazed
Upon a sloping bank of softest green;
A fairer edifice was never seen;
The high ranged columns own no mortal hand,
But seem a temple meet for Beauty's queen.
Like polished snow the marble pillars stand
In grace attempered majesty sublimely grand.

Gently ascending from a silvery flood,
Above the palace rose the shaded hill,
The lofty eminence was crowned with wood,
And the rich lawns, adorned by nature's skill,
The passing breezes with their odours fill;
Here ever blooming groves of orange glow,
And here all flowers which from their leaves distil
Ambrosial dew in sweet succession blow,
And trees of matchless size a fragrant shade bestow.

The sun looks glorious mid a sky serene,
And bids bright lustre sparkle o'er the tide;
The clear blue ocean at a distance seen
Bounds the gay landscape on the western side,
While closing round it with majestic pride,
The lofty rocks mid citron groves arise;
"Sure some divinity must here reside,"
As tranced in some bright vision, Psyche cries,
And scarce believes the bliss, or trusts her charmed eyes.

When lo! a voice divinely sweet she hears,
From unseen lips proceeds the heavenly sound;
" Psyche approach, dismiss thy timid fears,
" At length his bride thy longing spouse has found,
" And bids for thee immortal joys abound;
" For thee the palace rose at his command,
" For thee his love a bridal banquet crowned;
" He bids attendant nymphs around thee stand
" Prompt every wish to serve, a fond obedient band."

Increasing wonder filled her ravished soul,
For now the pompous portals opened wide,
There, pausing oft, with timid foot she stole
Through halls high domed, enriched with sculptured pride,
While gay saloons appeared on either side
In splendid vista opening to her sight;
And all with precious gems so beautified,
And furnished with such exquisite delight,
That scarce the beams of heaven emit such lustre bright.

The amethyst was there of violet hue,
And there the topaz shed its golden ray,
The chrysoberyl, and the sapphire blue
As the clear azure of a sunny day,
Or the mild eyes where amorous glances play;
The snow white jasper, and the opal's flame,
The blushing ruby, and the agate grey,
And there the gem which bears his luckless name
Whose death by Phœbus mourned ensured him deathless fame.

There the green emerald, there cornelians glow,
And rich carbuncles pour eternal light,
With all that India and Peru can shew,
Or Labrador can give so flaming bright
To the charmed mariner's half dazzled sight:
The coral paved baths with diamonds blaze:
And all that can the female heart delight
Of fair attire, the last recess displays,
And all that Luxury can ask, her eye surveys.

Now through the hall melodious music stole,
And self-prepared the splendid banquet stands,
Self-poured the nectar sparkles in the bowl,
The lute and viol touched by unseen hands
Aid the soft voices of the choral bands;
O'er the full board a brighter lustre beams
Than Persia's monarch at his feast commands:
For sweet refreshment all inviting seems
To taste celestial food, and pure ambrosial streams.

But when meek Eve hung out her dewy star,
And gently veiled with gradual hand the sky,
Lo! the bright folding doors retiring far,
Display to Psyche's captivated eye
All that voluptuous ease could e'er supply
To sooth the spirits in serene repose:
Beneath the velvet's purple canopy
Divinely formed a downy couch arose,
While alabaster lamps a milky light disclose.

Once more she hears the hymeneal strain;
Far other voices now attune the lay;
The swelling sounds approach, awhile remain,
And then retiring faint dissolved away:
The expiring lamps emit a feebler ray,
And soon in fragrant death extinguished lie:
Then virgin terrors Psyche's soul dismay,
When through the obscuring gloom she nought can spy,
But softly rustling sounds declare some Being nigh.

Oh, you for whom I write! whose hearts can melt
At the soft thrilling voice whose power you prove,
You know what charm, unutterably felt,
Attends the unexpected voice of Love:
Above the lyre, the lute's soft notes above,
With sweet enchantment to the soul it steals
And bears it to Elysium's happy grove;
You best can tell the rapture Psyche feels
When Love's ambrosial lip the vows of Hymen seals.

" 'Tis he, 'tis my deliverer! deep imprest
" Upon my heart those sounds I well recal,"
The blushing maid exclaimed, and on his breast
A tear of trembling ecstasy let fall.
But, ere the breezes of the morning call
Aurora from her purple, humid bed,
Psyche in vain explores the vacant hall,
Her tender lover from her arms is fled,
While sleep his downy wings had o'er her eye-lids spread.

Again the band invisible attend,
And female voices sooth the mournful bride;
Light hands to braid her hair assistance lend,
By some she sees the glowing bracelet tied,
Others officious hover at her side,
And each bright gem for her acceptance bring,
While some, the balmy air diffusing wide,
Fan softer perfumes from each odorous wing
Than the fresh bosom sheds of earliest, sweetest spring.

With songs divine her anxious soul they cheer,
And woo her footsteps to delicious bowers,
They bid the fruit more exquisite appear
Which at her feet its bright profusion showers:
For her they cull unknown, celestial flowers;
The gilded car they bid her fearless guide,
Which at her wish self-moved with wondrous powers,
The rapid bird's velocity defied,
While round the blooming isle it rolled with circuit wide.

Again they spread the feast, they strike the lyre,
But to her frequent questions nought reply,
Her lips in vain her lover's name require,
Or wherefore thus concealed he shuns her eye.
But when reluctant twilight veils the sky,
And each pale lamp successively expires;
Again she trembling hears the voice of joy,
Her spouse a tender confidence inspires,
But with a fond embrace ere dawn again retires.

To charm the languid hours of solitude
He oft invites her to the Muse's lore,
For none have vainly e'er the Muse pursued,
And those whom she delights, regret no more
The social, joyous hours, while rapt they soar
To worlds unknown, and live in fancy's dream:
Oh, Muse divine! thee only I implore,
Shed on my soul thy sweet inspiring beams,
And pleasure's gayest scene insipid folly seems!

Silence and solitude the Muses love,
And whom they charm they can alone suffice;
Nor ever tedious hour their votaries prove:
This solace now the lonely Psyche tries,
Or, while her hand the curious needle plies,
She learns from lips unseen celestial strains;
Responsive now with their soft voice she vies,
Or bids her plaintive harp express the pains
Which absence sore inflicts where Love all potent reigns.

But melancholy poisons all her joys,
And secret sorrows all her hopes depress,
Consuming languor every bliss destroys,
And sad she droops repining, comfortless.
Her tender lover well the cause can guess,
And sees too plain inevitable fate
Pursue her to the bowers of happiness.
" Oh, Psyche! most beloved, ere yet too late,
" Dread the impending ills and prize thy tranquil state."

In vain his weeping love he thus advised;
She longs to meet a parent's sweet embrace,
" Oh, were their sorrowing hearts at least apprised
" How Psyche's wondrous lot all fears may chase;
" For whom thy love prepared so fair a place!
" Let but my bliss their fond complaints repress,
" Let me but once behold a mother's face,
" Oh, spouse adored! and in full happiness
" This love-contented heart its solitude shall bless.

" Oh, by those beauties I must ne'er behold!
" The spicy-scented ringlets of thine hair:
" By that soft neck my loving arms enfold,
" Crown with a kind consent thy Psyche's prayer!
" Their dear embrace, their blessing let me share;
" So shall I stain our couch with tears no more:
" But, blest in thee, resign each other care,
" Nor seek again thy secret to explore,
" Which yet, denied thy sight, I ever must deplore."

Unable to resist her fond request,
Reluctant Cupid thus at last complied,
And sighing clasped her closer to his breast.
" Go then, my Psyche! go, my lovely bride!
" But let me in thy faith at least confide,
" That by no subtle, impious arts betrayed,
" Which, ah! too well I know will all be tried,
" Thy simply trusting heart shall e'er be swayed
" The secret veil to rend which fate thy screen hath made.

" For danger hovers o'er thy smiling days,
" One only way to shield thee yet I know;
" Unseen, I may securely guard thy ways
" And save thee from the threatened storm of woe;
" But forced, if known, my Psyche to forego,
" Thou never, never must again be mine!
" What mutual sorrows hence must ceaseless flow!
" Compelled thy dear embraces to resign,
" While thou to anguish doomed for lost delights shalt pine.

" Solace thy mind with hopes of future joy!
" In a dear infant thou shalt see my face;
" Blest mother soon of an immortal boy,
" In him his father's features thou shalt trace!
" Yet go! for thou art free, the bounds of space
" Are none for thee: attendant Zephyrs stay,
" Speak but thy will, and to the wished for place
" Their lovely mistress swift they shall convey:
" Yet hither, ah! return, ere fades the festive day."

" Light of my soul, far dearer than the day!"
(Exulting Psyche cries in grateful joy)
" Me all the bliss of earth could ill repay
" For thy most sweet, divine society;
" To thee again with rapture will I fly,
" Nor with less pleasure hail the star of eve
" Than when in tedious solitude I sigh;
" My vows of silent confidence believe,
" Nor think thy Psyche's faith will e'er thy love deceive."

Her suit obtained, in full contentment blest,
Her eyes at length in placid slumbers close.
Sleep, hapless fair! sleep on thy lover's breast!
Ah, not again to taste such pure repose!
Till thy sad heart by long experience knows
How much they err, who to their interest blind,
Slight the calm peace which from retirement flows;
And while they think their fleeting joys to bind,
Banish the tranquil bliss which heaven for man designed!

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

Introduction—Dangers of the World—Psyche conveyed by Zephyrs awakes once more in the paternal mansion—Envy of her Sisters—They plot her ruin—Inspire her with suspicion and terror—Psyche's return to the Palace of Love—Her disobedience—Love asleep—Psyche's amazement—The flight of Love—Sudden banishment of Psyche from the island of Pleasure—Her lamentations—Comforted by Love—Temple of Venus—Task imposed on Psyche conditional to her reconciliation with Venus—Psyche soothed and attended by Innocence—Psyche wandering as described in the opening of the first Canto.

CANTO II.

O h happy you! who blest with present bliss
See not with fatal prescience future tears,
Nor the dear moment of enjoyment miss
Through gloomy discontent, or sullen fears
Foreboding many a storm for coming years;
Change is the lot of all. Ourselves with scorn
Perhaps shall view what now so fair appears;
And wonder whence the fancied charm was born
Which now with vain despair from our fond grasp is torn!

Vain schemer, think not to prolong thy joy!
But cherish while it lasts the heavenly boon;
Expand thy sails! thy little bark shall fly
With the full tide of pleasure! though it soon
May feel the influence of the changeful moon,
It yet is thine! then let not doubts obscure
With cloudy vapours veil thy brilliant noon,
Nor let suspicion's tainted breath impure
Poison the favouring gale which speeds thy course secure!

Oh, Psyche, happy in thine ignorance!
Couldst thou but shun this heart tormenting bane;
Be but content, nor daringly advance
To meet the bitter hour of threatened pain;
Pure spotless dove! seek thy safe nest again;
Let true affection shun the public eye,
And quit the busy circle of the vain,
For there the treacherous snares concealed lie;
Oh timely warned escape! to safe retirement fly!

Bright shone the morn! and now its golden ray
Dispelled the slumbers from her radiant eyes,
Yet still in dreams her fancy seems to play,
For lo! she sees with rapture and surprise
Full in her view the well-known mansion rise,
And each loved scene of first endearment hails;
The air that first received her infant sighs
With wondring ecstasy she now inhales,
While every trembling nerve soft tenderness assails.

See from the dear pavilion, where she lay,
Breathless she flies with scarce assured feet,
Swift through the garden wings her eager way,
Her mourning parents ravished eyes to greet
With loveliest apparition strange and sweet:
Their days of anguish all o'erpaid they deem
By one blest hour of ecstasy so great:
Yet doubtingly they gaze, and anxious seem
To ask their raptured souls, "Oh, is this all a dream?"

The wondrous tale attentively they hear,
Repeated oft in broken words of joy,
She in their arms embraced, while every ear
Hangs on their Psyche's lips, and earnestly
On her is fixed each wonder speaking eye;
Till the sad hour arrives which bids them part,
And twilight darkens o'er the ruddy sky;
Divinely urged they let their child depart,
Pressed with a fond embrace to each adoring heart.

Trusting that wedded to a spouse divine
Secure is now their daughter's happiness,
They half contentedly their child resign,
Check the complaint, the rising sigh suppress,
And wipe the silent drops of bitterness.
Nor must she her departure more delay,
But bids them now their weeping Psyche bless;
Then back to the pavilion bends her way
Ere in the fading west quite sinks expiring day.

But, while her parents listen with delight,
Her sisters hearts the Furies agitate:
They look with envy on a lot so bright,
And all the honours of her splendid fate,
Scorning the meanness of their humbler state;
And how they best her ruin may devise.
With hidden rancour much they meditate,
Yet still they bear themselves in artful guise,
While 'mid the feigned caress, concealed the venom lies.

By malice urged, by ruthless envy stung,
With secret haste to seize their prey they flew,
Around her neck as in despair they clung;
Her soft complying nature well they knew,
And trusted by delaying to undo;
But when they found her resolute to go,
Their well laid stratagem they then pursue,
And, while they bid their treacherous sorrows flow,
Thus fright her simple heart with images of woe.

" Oh, hapless Psyche! thoughtless of thy doom!
" Yet hear thy sisters who have wept for thee,
" Since first a victim to thy living tomb,
" Obedient to the oracle's decree,
" Constrained we left thee to thy destiny.
" Since then no comfort could our woes abate;
" While thou wert lulled in false security
" We learned the secret horrors of thy fate,
" And heard prophetic lips thy future ills relate.

" Yet fearing never to behold thee more,
" Our filial care would fain the truth conceal;
" But from the sages cell this ring we bore,
" With power each latent magic to reveal:
" Some hope from hence our anxious bosoms feel
" That we from ruin may our Psyche save,
" Since Heaven propitious to our pious zeal,
" Thee to our frequent prayers in pity gave,
" That warned thou yet mayest shun thy sad untimely grave.

" Oh! how shall we declare the fatal truth?
" How wound thy tender bosom with alarms?
" Tell how the graces of thy blooming youth,
" Thy more than mortal, all-adored charms
" Have lain enamoured in a sorcerer's arms?
" Oh, Psyche! seize on this decisive hour,
" Escape the mischief of impending harms!
" Return no more to that enchanted bower,
" Fly the magician's arts, and dread his cruel power

" If, yet reluctant to forego thy love,
" Thy furtive joys and solitary state,
" Our fond officious care thy doubts reprove,
" At least let some precaution guard thy fate,
" Nor may our warning love be prized too late;
" This night thyself thou mayst convince thine eyes,
" Hide but a lamp, and cautiously await
" Till in deep slumber thy magician lies,
" This ring shall then disclose his foul deformities.

" That monster by the oracle foretold,
" Whose cursed spells both gods and men must fear,
" In his own image thou shalt then behold,
" And shuddering hate what now is prized so dear;
" Yet fly not then, though loathsome he appear,
" But let this dagger to his breast strike deep;
" Thy coward terrors then thou must not hear,
" For if with life he rouses from that sleep
" Nought then for thee remains, and we must hopeless
weep."

Oh! have you seen, when in the northern sky
The transient flame of lambent lightning plays,
In quick succession lucid streamers fly,
Now flashing roseate, and now milky rays,
While struck with awe the astonished rustics gaze?
Thus o'er her cheek the fleeting signals move,
Now pale with fear, now glowing with the blaze
Of much indignant, still confiding love,
Now horror's lurid hue with shame's deep blushes strove.

On her cold, passive hand the ring they place,
And hide the dagger in her folding vest;
Pleased the effects of their dire arts to trace
In the mute agony that swells her breast,
Already in her future ruin blest:
Conscious that now their poor deluded prey
Should never taste again delight or rest,
But sickening in suspicion's gloom decay,
Or urged by terrors rash their treacherous will obey.

While yet irresolute with sad surprise,
Mid doubt and love she stands in strange suspense,
Lo! gliding from her sisters wondering eyes
Returning Zephyrs gently bear her thence;
Lost all her hopes, her joys, her confidence,
Back to the earth her mournful eyes she threw,
As if imploring pity and defence;
While bathed in tears her golden tresses flew,
As in the breeze dispersed they caught the precious dew

Illumined bright now shines the splendid dome,
Melodious accents her arrival hail:
But not the torches' blaze can chase the gloom,
And all the soothing powers of music fail;
Trembling she seeks her couch with horror pale,
But first a lamp conceals in secret shade,
While unknown terrors all her soul assail.
Thus half their treacherous counsel is obeyed,
For still her gentle soul abhors the murderous blade.

And now, with softest whispers of delight,
Love welcomes Psyche still more fondly dear;
Not unobserved, though hid in deepest night,
The silent anguish of her secret fear.
He thinks that tenderness excites the tear
By the late image of her parents' grief,
And half offended seeks in vain to cheer,
Yet, while he speaks, her sorrows feel relief,
Too soon more keen to sting from this suspension brief!

Allowed to settle on celestial eyes
Soft Sleep exulting now exerts his sway,
From Psyche's anxious pillow gladly flies
To veil those orbs, whose pure and lambent ray
The powers of heaven submissively obey.
Trembling and breathless then she softly rose
And seized the lamp, where it obscurely lay,
With hand too rashly daring to disclose
The sacred veil which hung mysterious o'er her woes.

Twice, as with agitated step she went,
The lamp expiring shone with doubtful gleam,
As though it warned her from her rash intent:
And twice she paused, and on its trembling beam
Gazed with suspended breath, while voices seem
With murmuring sound along the roof to sigh;
As one just waking from a troublous dream,
With palpitating heart and straining eye,
Still fixed with fear remains, still thinks the danger nigh.

Oh, daring Muse! wilt thou indeed essay
To paint the wonders which that lamp could shew?
And canst thou hope in living words to say
The dazzling glories of that heavenly view?
Ah! well I ween, that if with pencil true
That splendid vision could be well exprest,
The fearful awe imprudent Psyche knew
Would seize with rapture every wondering breast,
When Love's all potent charms divinely stood confest.

All imperceptible to human touch,
His wings display celestial essence light,
The clear effulgence of the blaze is such,
The brilliant plumage shines so heavenly bright
That mortal eyes turn dazzled from the sight;
A youth he seems in manhood's freshest years;
Round his fair neck, as clinging with delight,
Each golden curl resplendently appears,
Or shades his darker brow, which grace majestic wears.

Or o'er his guileless front the ringlets bright
Their rays of sunny lustre seem to throw,
That front than polished ivory more white!
His blooming cheeks with deeper blushes glow
Than roses scattered o'er a bed of snow:
While on his lips, distilled in balmy dews,
(Those lips divine that even in silence know
The heart to touch) persuasion to infuse
Still hangs a rosy charm that never vainly sues.

The friendly curtain of indulgent sleep
Disclosed not yet his eyes' resistless sway,
But from their silky veil there seemed to peep
Some brilliant glances with a softened ray,
Which o'er his features exquisitely play,
And all his polished limbs suffuse with light.
Thus through some narrow space the azure day
Sudden its cheerful rays diffusing bright,
Wide darts its lucid beams, to gild the brow of night.

His fatal arrows and celestial bow
Beside the couch were negligently thrown,
Nor needs the god his dazzling arms, to show
His glorious birth, such beauty round him shone
As sure could spring from Beauty's self alone;
The gloom which glowed o'er all of soft desire,
Could well proclaim him Beauty's cherished son;
And Beauty's self will oft these charms admire,
And steal his witching smile, his glance's living fire.

Speechless with awe, in transport strangely lost
Long Psyche stood with fixed adoring eye;
Her limbs immoveable, her senses tost
Between amazement, fear, and ecstasy,
She hangs enamoured o'er the Deity.
Till from her trembling hand extinguished falls
The fatal lamp—He starts—and suddenly
Tremendous thunders echo through the halls,
While ruin's hideous crash bursts o'er the affrighted walls.

Dread horror seizes on her sinking heart,
A mortal chillness shudders at her breast,
Her soul shrinks fainting from death's icy dart,
The groan scarce uttered dies but half exprest,
And down she sinks in deadly swoon opprest:
But when at length, awaking from her trance,
The terrors of her fate stand all confest,
In vain she casts around her timid glance,
The rudely frowning scenes her former joys enhance.

No traces of those joys, alas, remain!
A desert solitude alone appears.
No verdant shade relieves the sandy plain,
The wide spread waste no gentle fountain cheers,
One barren face the dreary prospect wears;
Nought through the vast horizon meets her eye
To calm the dismal tumult of her fears,
No trace of human habitation nigh,
A sandy wild beneath, above a threatening sky.

The mists of morn yet chill the gloomy air,
And heavily obscure the clouded skies;
In the mute anguish of a fixed despair
Still on the ground immoveable she lies;
At length, with lifted hands and streaming eyes,
Her mournful prayers invoke offended Love,
"Oh, let me hear thy voice once more," she cries,
"In death at least thy pity let me move,
"And death, if but forgiven, a kind relief will prove.

"For what can life to thy lost Psyche give,
"What can it offer but a gloomy void?
"Why thus abandoned should I wish to live?
"To mourn the pleasure which I once enjoyed,
"The bliss my own rash folly hath destroyed;
"Of all my soul most prized, or held most dear,
"Nought but the sad remembrance doth abide,
"And late repentance of my impious fear;
"Remorse and vain regret what living soul can bear!

" Oh, art thou then indeed for ever gone!
" And art thou heedless of thy Psyche's woe!
" From these fond arms for ever art thou flown,
" And unregarded must my sorrows flow!
" Ah! why too happy did I ever know
" The rapturous charms thy tenderness inspires?
" Ah! why did thy affections stoop so low?
" Why kindle in a mortal breast such fires,
" Or with celestial love inflame such rash desires?

" Abandoned thus for ever by thy love,
" No greater punishment I now can bear,
" From fate no farther malice can I prove;
" Not all the horrors of this desert drear,
" Nor death itself can now excite a fear;
" The peopled earth a solitude as vast
" To this despairing heart would now appear;
" Here then, my transient joys for ever past,
" Let thine expiring bride thy pardon gain at last!"

Now prostrate on the bare unfriendly ground,
She waits her doom in silent agony;
When lo! the well known soft celestial sound
She hears once more with breathless ecstasy,
" Oh! yet too dearly loved! Lost Psyche! Why
" With cruel fate wouldst thou unite thy power,
" And force me thus thine arms adored to fly?
" Yet cheer thy drooping soul, some happier hour
" Thy banished steps may lead back to thy lover's bower.

" Though angry Venus we no more can shun,
" Appease that anger and I yet am thine!
" Lo! where her temple glitters to the sun;
" With humble penitence approach her shrine,
" Perhaps to pity she may yet incline;
" But should her cruel wrath these hopes deceive,
" And thou, alas! must never more be mine,
" Yet shall thy lover ne'er his Psyche leave,
" But, if the fates allow, unseen thy woes relieve.

" Stronger than I, they now forbid my stay;
" Psyche beloved, adieu!" Scarce can she hear
The last faint words, which gently melt away;
And now more faint the dying sounds appear,
Borne to a distance from her longing ear;
Yet still attentively she stands unmoved,
To catch those accents which her soul could cheer,
That soothing voice which had so sweetly proved
That still his tender heart offending Psyche loved!

And now the joyous sun had cleared the sky,
The mist dispelled revealed the splendid fane;
A palmy grove majestically high
Screens the fair building from the desert plain;
Of alabaster white and free from stain
Mid the tall trees the tapering columns rose;
Thither, with fainting steps, and weary pain,
Obedient to the voice at length she goes,
And at the threshold seeks protection and repose.

Round the soft scene immortal roses bloom,
While lucid myrtles in the breezes play;
No savage beast did ever yet presume
With foot impure within the grove to stray,
And far from hence flies every bird of prey;
Thus, mid the sandy Garamantian wild,
When Macedonia's lord pursued his way,
The sacred temple of great Ammon smiled,
And green encircling shades the long fatigue beguiled:

With awe that fearfully her doom awaits
Still at the portal Psyche timid lies,
When lo! advancing from the hallowed gates
Trembling she views with reverential eyes
An aged priest. A myrtle bough supplies
A wand, and roses bind his snowy brows:
" Bear hence thy feet profane (he sternly cries)
" Thy longer stay the goddess disallows,
" Fly, nor her fiercer wrath too daringly arouse!"

His pure white robe imploringly she held,
And, bathed in tears, embraced his sacred knees;
Her mournful charms relenting he beheld,
And melting pity in his eye she sees;
" Hope not (he cries) the goddess to appease,
" Retire at awful distance from her shrine,
" But seek the refuge of those sheltering trees,
" And now thy soul with humble awe incline
" To hear her sacred will, and mark the words divine."

" Presumptuous Psyche! whose aspiring soul
" The God of Love has dared to arrogate;
" Rival of Venus! whose supreme control
" Is now asserted by all ruling fate,
" No suppliant tears her vengeance shall abate
" Till thou hast raised an altar to her power,
" Where perfect happiness, in lonely state,
" Has fixed her temple in secluded bower,
" By foot impure of man untrodden to this hour!

" And on the altar must thou place an urn
" Filled from immortal Beauty's sacred spring,
" Which foul deformity to grace can turn,
" And back to fond affection's eyes can bring
" The charms which fleeting fled on transient wing;
" Snatched from the rugged steep where first they rise,
" Dark rocks their crystal source o'ershadowing,
" Let their clear water sparkle to the skies
" Where cloudless lustre beams which happiness supplies!

" To Venus thus for ever reconciled,
" (This one atonement all her wrath disarms,)
" From thy loved Cupid then no more exiled
" There shalt thou, free from sorrow and alarms,
" Enjoy for ever his celestial charms.
" But never shalt thou taste a pure repose,
" Nor ever meet thy lover's circling arms,
" Till, all subdued that shall thy steps oppose,
" Thy perils there shall end, escaped from all thy foes."

With meek submissive woe she heard her doom,
Nor to the holy minister replied;
But in the myrtle grove's mysterious gloom
She silently retired her grief to hide.
Hopeless to tread the waste without a guide,
All unrefreshed and faint from toil she lies:
When lo! her present wants are all supplied,
Sent by the hand of Love a turtle flies,
And sets delicious food before her wondering eyes.

Cheered by the favouring omen, softer tears
Relieve her bosom from its cruel weight:
She blames the sad despondence of her fears,
When still protected by a power so great,
His tenderness her toils will mitigate.
Then with renewed strength at length she goes,
Hoping to find some skilled in secret fate,
Some learned sage who haply might disclose
Where lay that blissful bower the end of all her woes.

And as she went, behold, with hovering flight
The dove preceded still her doubtful way;
Its spotless plumage of the purest white,
Which shone resplendent in the blaze of day,
Could even in darkest gloom a light display;
Of heavenly birth, when first to mortals given
Named Innocence. But ah! too short its stay;
By ravenous birds it fearfully was driven
Back to reside with Love, a denizen of heaven.

Now through the trackless wild, o'er many a mile
The messenger of Cupid led the fair,
And cheered with hope her solitary toil,
Till now a brighter face the prospects wear,
Past are the sandy wastes and deserts bare,
And many a verdant hill, and grassy dale,
And trace, that mortal culture might declare,
And many a wild wood dark, and joyous vale
Appeared her soul to sooth, could soothing scenes avail.

But other fears her timid soul distress,
Mid strangers unprotected and alone,
The desert wilderness alarmed her less
Than cities, thus unfriended and unknown;
But where the path was all by moss o'ergrown,
There still she chose her solitary way,
Where'er her faithful Dove before had flown
Fearful of nought she might securely stray,
For still his care supplied the wants of every day.

And still she entered every sacred grove
And homage paid to each divinity,
But chief the altar of almighty Love
Weeping embraced with fond imploring eye;
To every oracle her hopes apply,
Instructions for her dangerous path to gain:
Exclaiming oft, with a desponding sigh,
" Ah! how through all such dangers, toil and pain,
" Shall Psyche's helpless steps their object e'er attain!"

And now remote from every peopled town
One sultry day a cooling bower she found:
There, as I whilom sung, she laid her down,
Where rich profusion of gay flowers around
Had decked with artless shew the sloping ground;
There the wild rose and modest violet grow,
There all thy charms, Narcissus! still abound:
There wrapt in verdure fragrant lilies blow,
Lilies that love the vale, and hide their bells of snow.

Thy flowers, Adonis! bright vermilion shew;
Still for his love the yellow Crocus pines;
There, while indignant blushes seem to glow,
Beloved by Phœbus his Acanthus shines;
Reseda still her drooping head reclines
With faithful homage to his golden rays,
And, though mid clouds their lustre he resigns,
An image of the constant heart displays,
While silent still she turns her fond pursuing gaze.

And every sweet that Spring with fairy hands
Scatters in thy green path, enchanting May!
And every flowering shrub there clustering stands
As though they wooed her to a short delay,
Yielding a charm to sooth her weary way;
Soft was the tufted moss, and sweet the breeze,
With lulling sound the murmuring waters play,
With lulling sound from all the rustling trees
The fragrant gale invites to cool refreshing ease.

There as she sought repose, her sorrowing heart
Recalled her absent love with bitter sighs;
Regret had deeply fixed the poisoned dart,
Which ever rankling in her bosom lies;
In vain she seeks to close her weary eyes,
Those eyes still swim incessantly in tears,
Hope in her cheerless bosom fading dies,
Distracted by a thousand cruel fears,
While banished from his love for ever she appears.

Oh ! thou best comforter of that sad heart
Whom fortune's spite assails ; come, gentle Sleep,
The weary mourner sooth ! for well the art
Thou knowest in soft forgetfulness to steep
The eyes which sorrow taught to watch and weep ;
Let blissful visions now her spirits cheer,
Or lull her cares to peace in slumbers deep,
Till from fatigue refreshed and anxious fear
Hope like the morning star once more shall re-appear.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

Praise of Love—Psyche's Champion, with his attendant Constance, described—The Knight assumes the command of Passion, who appears as a Lion—Psyche proceeds under the protection of the Knight—Persuaded to repose in the Bower of loose Delight—Her escape from thence—Led by Innocence to Retirement—Psyche meets Vanity and Flattery—Betrayed by them into the power of Ambition—Rescued by her Knight.

CANTO III.

Oh, who art thou who darest of Love complain?
He is a gentle spirit and injures none!
His foes are ours; from them the bitter pain,
The keen, deep anguish, the heart-rending groan,
Which in his milder reign are never known.
His tears are softer than the April showers,
White-handed Innocence supports his throne,
His sighs are sweet as breath of earliest flowers,
Affection guides his steps, and peace protects his bowers.

But scarce admittance he on earth can find,
Opposed by vanity, by fraud ensnared,
Suspicion frights him from the gloomy mind,
And jealousy in vain his smiles has shared,
Whose sullen frown the gentle godhead scared;
From passion's rapid blaze in haste he flies,
His wings alone the fiercer flame has spared;
From him ambition turns his scornful eyes,
And avarice, slave to gold, a generous lord denies.

But chief Inconstancy his power destroys;
To mock his lovely form, an idle train
With magic skill she dressed in transient toys,
By these the selfish votaries she can gain
Whom Love's more simple bands could ne'er detain.
Ah! how shall Psyche through such mortal foes
The fated end of all her toils attain?
Sadly she ponders o'er her hopeless woes,
Till on the pillowy turf she sinks to short repose.

But, as the careless lamb whom playful chance
Thoughtless of danger has enticed to rove,
Amidst her gambols casts a sudden glance
Where lurks her wily foe within the grove,
Anxious to fly, but still afraid to move,
All hopeless of escape—so looks the maid,
Such dread her half-awakened senses prove,
When roused from sleep before her eyes dismayed
A knight all armed appears close mid the embowering shade.

Trembling she gazed, until the stranger knight
Tempering with mildest courtesy, the awe
Which majesty inspired, low in her sight
Obeisance made; nor would he nearer draw,
Till, half subdued surprise and fear, he saw
Pale terror yielding to the rosy grace,
The pure congealed blood begin to thaw,
And flowing through her crystal veins apace
Suffuse with mantling blush her mild celestial face.

Gently approaching then with fairest speech
He proffered service to the lonely dame,
And prayed her that she might not so impeach
The honour of his youth's yet spotless fame,
As aught to fear which might his knighthood shame;
But if her unprotected steps to guard,
The glory of her champion he might claim,
He asked no other guerdon or reward,
Than what bright honour's self might to his deeds award.

Doubting, and musing much within her mind,
With half suspicious, half confiding eye,
Awhile she stood; her thoughts bewildered find
No utterance, unwilling to deny
Such proffered aid, yet bashful to reply
With quick assent, since though concealed his face
Beneath his helm, yet might she well espy
And in each fair proportion plainly trace
The symmetry of form, and perfect youthful grace.

Hard were it to describe the nameless charm
That o'er each limb, in every action played,
The softness of that voice, which could disarm
The hand of fury of its deadly blade:
In shining armour was the youth arrayed,
And on his shield a bleeding heart he bore,
His lofty crest light plumes of azure shade,
There shone a wounded dragon bathed in gore,
And bright with silver beamed the silken scarf he wore.

His milk-white steed with glittering trappings blazed,
Whose reins a beauteous boy attendant held,
On the fair squire with wonder Psyche gazed,
For scarce he seemed of age to bear the shield,
Far less a ponderous lance, or sword to wield;
Yet well this little page his lord had served,
His youthful arm had many a foe repelled,
His watchful eye from many a snare preserved,
Nor ever from his steps in any danger swerved.

Graced with the gift of a perpetual youth,
No lapse of years had power his form to change;
Constance was named the boy, whose matchless truth
Though oft inticed with other lords to range
Nor fraud, nor force could from that knight estrange;
His mantle of celestial blue was made,
And its bright texture wrought with art so strange
That the fresh brilliant gloss could never fade,
And lustre yet unknown to Psyche's eyes displayed.

Thus while she gazed, behold with horrid roar
A lion from the neighbouring forest rushed,
A golden chain around his neck he bore,
Which richly glowing with carbuncles blushed,
While his fierce eye-balls fiery rage had flushed:
Forth steps the youth before the affrighted fair,
Who in his mighty paw already crushed
Seems in the terrors of her wild despair,
And her mute quivering lips a death-like paleness wear.

But scarce the kingly beast the knight beheld,
When crouching low, submissive at his feet,
His wrath extinguished, and his valour quelled,
He seemed with reverence and obeisance sweet
Him as his long acknowledged lord to greet.
While, in acceptance of the new command,
Well pleased the youth received the homage meet,
Then seized the splendid chain with steady hand
Full confident to rule, and every foe withstand.

And, when at length recovered from her fear
The timid Psyche mounts his docile steed,
Much prayed, she tells to his attentive ear
(As on her purposed journey they proceed)
The doubtful course the oracle decreed:
And how observant of her friendly guide,
She still pursued its flight, with all the speed
Her fainting strength had hitherto supplied:
What pathless wilds she crossed! What forests dark-
ling wide!

Which having heard, the courteous knight began
With counsel sweet to sooth her wounded heart;
Divinely eloquent, persuasion ran
The herald of his words ere they depart
His lips, which well might confidence impart,
As he revealed how he himself was bound
By solemn vow, that neither force nor art
His helmet should unloose, till he had found
The bower of happiness, that long sought fairy ground.

" I too (he said) divided from my love,
" The offended power of Venus deprecate,
" Like thee, through paths untrodden, sadly rove
" In search of that fair spot prescribed by fate,
" The blessed term of my afflicted state,
" Where I the mistress of my soul shall find,
" For whose dear sake no toil to me seems great,
" Nor any dangers to my search assigned
" Can from its purpose fright my ardent longing mind.

" Psyche! thy soft and sympathising heart
" Shall share the rapture of thy loyal knight;
" He too, in thy content shall bear a part,
" Blest witness of thy new restored delight;
" My vows of true allegiance here I plight,
" Ne'er to forsake thee till thy perils end,
" Thy steps to guard, in thy protection fight,
" By counsel aid, and by my arm defend,
" And prove myself in all, thy champion and thy friend."

So on they went, her cheerless heart revived
By promised succour in her doubtful way;
And much of hope she to herself derived,
From the warm eagerness his lips display
In their pursuit to suffer no delay:
" And sure, (she softly sighed) my dearest Lord,
" Thy watchful love still guides me as I stray,
" Not chance alone could such an aid afford,
" Lo! beasts of prey confess the heaven-assisted sword."

Now from his crystal urn, with chilling hand,
Vesper had sprinkled all the earth with dew,
A misty veil obscured the neighbouring land,
And shut the fading landscape from their view;
A beaten path they eagerly pursue,
(For now refreshment and repose they need
As Psyche weary of long travel grew)
Where by a river's bank it seemed to lead,
Along its sinuous course they heedlessly proceed.

At length the lordly beast that bore the knight
Explored the river's depth with sudden bound:
Psyche, who heard the plunge with strange affright,
Her champion re-assured with welcome sound,
That he the other bank had safely found;
And, while he spoke, emerging from the shade,
A joyous goodly train appear around,
Of many a gallant youth and white robed maid,
Who grateful welcome gave, and courteous greeting paid.

Quick through the trees a thousand torches blazed
The gloom to banish, and the scene disclose
To Psyche all irresolute, amazed:
A bridge with stately arch at distance rose,
Thither at once the gay assembly goes,
Not unattended by the charmed knight,
Inviting Psyche to partake repose,
Pointing where shone their bower illumined bright,
Their bower so passing fair, the bower of loose Delight.

At length with timid foot the bridge she past,
And to her guardian knight clung fearfully,
While many a doubting glance around she cast,
If still her watchful dove she might espy;
Feebly it seemed on labouring wing to fly,
Till, dazzled by the sudden glare around,
In painful trance is closed its dizzy eye,
And had it not fair Psyche's bosom found,
Its drooping pinion soon had touched the unhallowed ground.

Hence there arose within her heart sore dread
Which no alluring pleasure could dispel;
The splendid hall with luscious banquet spread,
The soft-breathed flutes which in sweet concert swell,
With melody of song unspeakable;
Nor the light dancing troop in roses drest,
Could chase the terrors which she dared not tell,
While fondly cherished in her anxious breast
She strove in vain to sooth the fluttering bird to rest.

On a soft downy couch the guests are placed,
And close behind them stands their watchful page,
But much his strict attendance there disgraced,
And much was scorned his green and tender age,
His calm fixed eye, and steady aspect sage:
But him nor rude disdain, nor mockery,
Nor soothing blandishments could e'er engage
The wanton mazes of their sports to try,
Or from his lord to turn his firm adhering eye.

White bosomed nymphs around with loosened zones
All on the guests obsequiously tend,
Some sing of love with soft expiring tones,
While Psyche's melting eyes the strain commend;
Some o'er their heads the canopy suspend,
Some hold the sparkling bowl, while some with skill
Ambrosial showers and balmy juices blend,
Or the gay lamps with liquid odours fill
Whose many coloured fires divinest sweets distil.

And now a softer light they seemed to shed,
And sweetest music ushered in their queen:
Her languid steps by winged boys are led,
Who in their semblance might have Cupids been:
Close wrapt in veils her following train was seen;
Herself looked lovely in her loose attire,
Her smiling eyes gave lustre to the scene,
And still, where'er they turned their wanton fire,
Each thrilling nerve confessed the rapture they inspire.

The stranger guests she viewed with welcome glad,
And crowned the banquet with reception sweet,
To fill the glowing bowl her nymphs she bad,
And graceful rising from her splendid seat
She would herself present the sparkling treat;
When lo! the dove alarmed with sudden start,
Spurned the bright cup and dashed it at her feet,
For well he knew 'twas mixed with treacherous art
To sting his Psyche's breast with agonizing smart.

Regardless of her supplicating tears
Each eye with vengeful rage the insult sees,
Her knight's protection now in vain appears;
The offended sovereign anxious to appease,
A thousand hands prepare the dove to seize:
Nor was this all, for as the tumult rose,
Sudden more thick than swarm of summer bees,
The secret dens their venomed hoards disclose,
And horror at the sight her vital spirits froze.

Hissing aloud with undulations dire,
Their forked tongues unnumbered serpents show,
Their tainted breath emitting poisonous fire,
All turn on Psyche as their mortal foe;
But he, whose arm was never weak or slow,
Now rushed before her with resistless spring,
On either side the oft-repeated blow
Repulsed the malice of their deadly sting,
While sparks of wrathful fire from their fierce jaws they fling.

" Fly, Psyche! these are slander's hellish brood!
" Contest I know is vain," her champion cried.
Her passage now the opposing train withstood;
Struck with disgust their hideous forms she spied.
For lo! each silken veil is thrown aside,
And foul deformity, and filth obscene,
With monstrous shapes appear on every side;
But vanished is their fair and treacherous queen,
And with her every charm that decked the enchanted scene.

Meanwhile the dove had soared above their reach,
But hovered still in anxious Psyche's sight,
Precursor of escape, it seemed to teach
Whither she safest might direct her flight,
And find a passport in her foes' despite;
One rugged path there lay with briars o'ergrown,
Then dark and dismal with the shades of night,
Thither the dove on rapid wing had flown,
Conspicuous mid the gloom its silver plumage shone.

Yet she delayed, o'ercome by terror's power,
And scarce her fainting form the knight could shield,
When lo! still active in the trying hour,
Constance rushed fearless through the dreadful field,
With breast-plate firm invulnerably steeled,
He heeded not the storms which round him press,
To any perils he disdained to yield,
Endued with prudence as with hardiness,
And ever skilled to bring due succour in distress.

Lo! swift returning on his master's steed,
In his right hand he held the lion's chain,
The mighty beast his gentleness could lead,
Though little used to bear the curb or rein,
And mid those groves accustomed to remain,
Yet now prepared, with sweet submissive grace,
He ready stands the knight to bear again,
While trembling Psyche on the steed they place,
Which swift as lightning flies far from the dreadful chase.

Rough was the rude wild way, and many a thorn
Tore her loose garments in their rapid flight,
O'er many a league the panting fair is borne,
Till now, emerging from the shades of night,
The grey-eyed morn stole forth her pallid light.
Then first she paused, unable to proceed,
Exhausted with fatigue, and pain, and fright.
"Turn, Psyche," cried the youth, "relax thy speed,
"And see thyself at length from thy pursuers freed."

Mid the thick forest was a lonely dell,
Where foot of man was seldom known to tread,
The sloping hills all round in graceful swell
The little green with woods environed;
Hither the dove their passive course had led:
Here the thin smoke blue rising mid the trees,
Where broad and brown the deepest umbrage spread,
Spoke the abode of safe retired ease,
And Psyche gladly there her dove descending sees.

In lowly cottage, walled with mossy sod,
Close by a little spring's perpetual rill,
A hermit dwelt, who many a year had trod
With sacred solitude that pine-clad hill,
And loved with holy images to fill
His soul enrapt; yet courteous then besought
A while secluded here to rest; and still
Replete with kind and hospitable thought,
To a sequestered bower the wearied Psyche brought.

Skilled in the virtue of each healing flower,
And the wild fruit's restoring juice to blend,
He spreads the frugal fare of wholesome power,
And heedfully his cares their wants attend;
A docile ear to his advice they lend,
And sage instruction from his precepts take,
Which much their future journey may befriend;
Wisdom with soothing eloquence he spake,
Pleased to resolve their doubts, and all their cares partake.

In those sweet placid scenes awhile they rest,
Till Psyche finds her fainting strength revive;
And here her dove, as in a quiet nest,
Delighted seems to sportive joy alive;
And hence they surest confidence derive.
He plumes his wings, and through his swelling throat
(No more a ruffled, fearful fugitive)
In gentle murmurs pours his dulcet note,
While Psyche listening sits in some still vale remote.

Oh! have you never known the silent charm
That undisturbed retirement yields the soul,
Where no intruder might your peace alarm,
And tenderness hath wept without control,
While melting fondness o'er the bosom stole?
Did fancy never, in some lonely grove,
Abridge the hours which must in absence roll?
Those pensive pleasures did you never prove,
Oh, you have never loved! you know not what is love!

They do not love who can to these prefer
The tumult of the gay, or folly's roar;
The Muse they know not; nor delight in her
Who can the troubled soul to rest restore,
Calm contemplation: Yes, I must deplore
Their joyless state, even more than his who mourns
His love for ever lost; delight no more
Unto his widowed heart indeed returns,
Yet, while he weeps, his soul their cold indifference spurns.

But if soft hope illumines fancy's dream,
Assuring him of love and constancy,
How exquisite do then the moments seem,
When he may hide himself from every eye,
And cherish the dear thought in secrecy!
While sweet remembrance sooths his thrilling heart,
And brings once more past hours of kindness nigh,
Recals the look of love when forced to part,
And turns to drops of joy the tears that sadly start.

Forgetful of the dangers of her way,
Imagination oft would Psyche bear
To her long travel's end, and that blest day
When Love unveiled should to her eyes appear;
When she might view his charms exempt from fear,
Taste his pure kisses, feel his balmy sighs,
Rest in the fond embrace of arms so dear,
Gaze with soft rapture on his melting eyes,
And hear his voice divine, the music of the skies!

Their destined course impatient to achieve,
The knight is urgent onward to proceed:
Cheered with recruited strength they take their leave
Of their kind host, and pay their grateful meed
Of warmest thanks sincere; onward they speed
Their sunless journey long through forests green,
And tangled thickets rank with many a weed;
And when at closing day a hut is seen,
They seek the humble roof, nor scorn its welcome mean.

It happened once that early roused from sleep,
(Ere her damp veil the virgin morn had cast
From her pale face, not yet with blushes deep
Lovely suffused, as when approaching fast
His herald star proclaims her spouse at last)
Psyche forsaking soon her homely bed,
Alone had fearless the low threshold past,
And, to beguile the hours which lingering fled,
Light o'er the dewy plain walked forth with nimble tread.

Yet though the knight close wrapt in slumber lay,
Her steps, at distance, still the page pursued,
Fearful that danger might befal her way,
Or lest, entangled in the mazy wood,
Returning she should miss the pathway rude.
The lark now hails the sun with rapturous song,
The cheerful earth resounds with gratitude,
O'er the gay scene, as Psyche tript along,
She felt her spirits rise, her lightened heart grow strong.

And hark, soft music steals upon the ear!
'Tis woman's voice most exquisitely sweet!
Behold two female forms approaching near
Arrest with wonder Psyche's timid feet;
On a gay car, by speckled panthers fleet
Is drawn in gallant state a seeming queen,
And at her foot on low but graceful seat
A gentle nymph of lovely form is seen,
In robe of fairest white, with scarf of pleasant green.

In strains of most bewitching harmony,
And still adapted to her sovereign's praise,
She filled the groves with such sweet melody,
That, quite o'ercome with rapture and amaze,
Psyche stood listening to the warbled lays;
Yet with a sullen, scarce approving ear
Her mistress sits, but with attentive gaze,
Her eyes she fixes on a mirror clear
Where still by fancy's spell unrivalled charms appear.

And, as she looked with aspect ever new,
She seemed on change and novel grace intent,
Her robe was formed of ever varying hue,
And whimsically placed each ornament;
On her attire, with rich luxuriance spent,
The treasures of the earth, the sea, the air,
Are vainly heaped her wishes to content;
Yet were her arms and snowy bosom bare,
And both in painted pride shone exquisitely fair.

Her braided tresses in profusion drest,
Circled with diadem, and nodding plumes,
Sported their artful ringlets o'er her breast,
And to the breezes gave their rich perfumes;
Her cheek with tint of borrowed roses blooms:
Used to receive from all rich offerings,
She quaffs with conscious right the fragrant fumes
Which her attendant from a censer flings,
Who graceful feeds the flame with incense while she sings.

Soon as her glance fair Psyche's form had caught,
Her soft attendant smiling she addressed:
" Behold, Lusinga! couldst thou e'er have thought
" That these wild woods were so in beauty blest?
" Let but that nymph in my attire be drest
" And scarce her loveliness will yield to mine!
" At least invite her in our bower to rest,
" Before her eyes let all my splendor shine,
" Perhaps to dwell with us her heart we may incline."

With softest smile applauding all she heard,
Lusinga bowing left her golden seat,
And Psyche, who at first in doubt had feared
While listening to the lay so silver sweet,
Now passive followed with unconscious feet;
Till Constance, all alarmed, impatient flew,
And soft his whispers of the maid entreat
To fly the Syren's song, for well he knew
What lurking dangers hence would to his Lord ensue.

" Oh, do not trust her treacherous lips," he cried,
" She is the subtle slave of Vanity,
" Her queen, the child of folly, and of pride,
" To lure thee to her power each art will try,
" Nor ever will release thee peaceably."
He spoke, but spoke in vain, for lo! from far,
Of giant port they fast approaching spy
A knight, high mounted on a glittering car,
From whose conspicuous crest flames wide a dazzling star.

" Psyche, escape! Ambition is at hand!"
The page exclaims: while swift as thought he flies;
She would have followed, but with parley bland
Lusinga soon her terrors pacifies.
" Fair nymph, ascend my car," the sovereign cries,
" I will convey thee where thy wishes lead,
" Haply the safest course I may advise
" How thou thy journey mayst perform with speed;
" For ne'er in woods to dwell such beauty was decreed."

So gently urgent her consent they wooed
With much persuasion of the stranger knight,
That yielding Psyche now no more withstood,
But pointing out to her observant sight
The humble cot where she had passed the night,
She prayed her kind conductress there to turn,
And promised to herself what vast delight
Her wondering knight would feel at her return,
And with what blushing shame the timid page would burn.

But scarcely had she climbed the fatal car
When swifter than the wind the panthers flew,
The traversed plains and woods, receding far,
Soon shut from trembling Psyche's anxious view
The spot where she had left her guardian true;
With desperate efforts, all in vain she tries
To escape the ills which now too sure she knew
Must from her ill-placed confidence arise:
Betrayed—Ah! self-betrayed, a wretched sacrifice

She strove to quit the car with sudden bound,
Ah, vain attempt! she now perceived too late
A thousand silken trammels, subtly wound
O'er her fair form, detained her as she sate:
Lost in despair she yields to her sad fate,
And silent hears but with augmented fright
The queen describe her brother's splendid state,
Who now outstripped them by his rapid flight,
And prest his foaming steeds to gain the arduous height.

High o'er the spacious plain a mountain rose,
A stately castle on its summit stood:
Huge craggy cliffs behind their strength oppose
To the rough surges of the dashing flood;
The rocky shores a boldly rising wood
On either side conceals; bright shine the towers
And seem to smile upon the billows rude.
In front the eye, with comprehensive powers,
Sees wide extended plains enriched with splendid bowers.

Hither they bore the sad reluctant fair,
Who mounts with dizzy eye the awful steep;
The blazing structure seems high poised in air,
And its light pillars tremble o'er the deep:
As yet the heavens are calm, the tempests sleep,
She knows not half the horrors of her fate:
Nor feels the approaching ruin's whirlwind sweep:
Yet with ill-boding fears she past the gate,
And turned with sickening dread from scenes of gorgeous state.

In vain the haughty master of the hall
Invites her to partake his regal throne,
With cold indifference she looks on all
The gilded trophies, and the well-wrought stone
Which in triumphal arches proudly shone:
And as she casts around her timid eye,
Back to her knight her trembling heart is flown,
And many an anxious wish, and many a sigh
Invokes his gallant arm protection to supply.

Sudden the lurid heavens obscurely frown,
And sweeping gusts the coming storm proclaim;
Flattery's soft voice the howling tempests drown,
While the roofs catch the greedy lightning's flame.
Loud in their fears, the attendant train exclaim
The light built fabric ne'er can stand the blast,
And all its insecure foundations blame:
Tumultuously they rush: the chief aghast
Beholds his throne o'erturned, his train dispersing fast.

Psyche dismayed, yet thoughtful of escape,
In anxious silence to the portal prest;
And freedom would have hailed in any shape
Though seen in death's tremendous colours drest:
But ah! she feels the knight's strong grasp arrest
Her trembling steps. "Think not," he cries, "to fly
"With yon false crowd who by my favours blest,
"Can now desert me when with changeful eye
"Inclement fortune frowns from yon dark angry sky."

While yet he spoke loud bursts the groaning hall,
With frightful peal the thundering domes resound,
Disjointed columns in wild ruin fall,
While the huge arches tremble to the ground.
Yet unappalled amid the crush is found
The daring chief: his hold he firm maintains
Though hideous devastation roars around;
Plunged headlong down his prey he still sustains,
Who in his powerful grasp in death-like swoon remains.

Down sinks the palace with its mighty lord,
Hurled from the awful steep with vehemence
Even to the floods below, which angry roared
And gaping wide received the weight immense:
Indignant still, with fearless confidence
He rose, high mounting o'er the heaving waves;
Against their rage one arm is his defence,
The other still his lovely burden saves,
Though strong the billows beat, and fierce the tempest raves.

The blazing star yet shone upon his brow,
And flamed triumphant o'er the dashing main;
He rides secure the watery waste, and now
The sheltering shore he might in safety gain;
The sheltering shore he shuns with proud disdain,
And breasts the adverse tide. Ah, rash resource!
You vessel, Prince, thou never shalt attain!
For plunging 'mid the deep, with generous force,
See where the sea's lord pursues thy hardy course!

Psyche a well known voice to life restores,
Once more her eyes unclosing view the light,
But not the waters, nor receding shores,
One only object can arrest her sight,
High o'er the flood she sees her valiant knight,
And sudden joy, and hopes scarce trusted cheer
Even in that awful moment's dread affright;
Her feeble cry indeed he cannot hear,
But sees her out-stretched arms, and seems already near.

In vain the giant knight exerts his strength;
Urged by the impetuous youth the lion prest,
And gaining fast upon his flight, at length
Prepared his daring progress to arrest,
And seized with furious jaw his struggling breast;
Gasping he loosed his hold—and Psyche lost
The o'erwhelming wave with ruin had opprest,
But Constance, ever near when needed most,
The sinking beauty caught and bore her to the coast.

Stung with the shame of the relinquished prey,
Mad with revenge, and hate, and conscious pride,
The knight, recovered from his short dismay,
Dashes resistless through the foaming tide;
The billows yielding to his arm divide,
As rushing on the youth he seeks the shore;
But now a combat strange on either side
Amid the waves begins; each hopes no more
The engulphing deep his foe shall e'er to light restore.

Beside the cold inhospitable lands
Where suns long absent dawn with lustre pale,
Thus on his bark the bold Biscayen stands,
And bids his javelin rouse the parent whale:
Fear, pain, and rage at once her breast assail,
The agitated ocean foams around
Lashed by the sounding fury of her tail,
Or as she mounts the surge with frightful bound,
Wide echoing to her cries the bellowing shores resound.

Fierce was the contest, but at length subdued,
The youth exulting sees his giant foe.
With wonder still the enormous limbs he viewed
Which lifeless now the waves supporting show;
His starred helm, that now was first laid low,
He seized as trophy of the wonderous fight,
And bade the sparkling gem on Constance glow,
While Psyche's eyes, soft beaming with delight,
Through tears of grateful praise applaud her gallant knight.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.

Introduction—Sympathy—Suspicion—Psyche benighted—Credulity represented, according to a Picture by Apelles, as an old Woman the devoted prey of Slander, or the Blatant Beast—Contest between the Knight and Slander—The Knight wounded—Slander flies—Credulity leads Psyche to the Castle of Suspicion—Psyche deluded, laments the desertion of her Knight to the train of Inconstancy—Psyche betrayed by Suspicion into the power of Jealousy—Persuaded by him that her Knight, by whom she was then abandoned, was indeed Love—Psyche delivered by her Knight—Reconciliation.

CANTO IV.

FULL gladsome was my heart ere while to tell
How proud Ambition owned superior Love;
For ah! too oft his sterner power could quell
The mild affections which more gently move,
And rather silent fled than with him strove:
For Love content and tranquil saw with dread
The busy scenes Ambition's schemes approve,
And, by the hand of Peace obscurely led,
From pride of public life disgusted ever fled.

There are who know not the delicious charm
Of sympathising hearts; let such employ
Their active minds; the trumpet's loud alarm
Shall yield them hope of honourable joy,
And courts may lure them with each splendid toy:
But ne'er may vanity or thirst of fame
The dearer bliss of loving life destroy!
Oh! blind to man's chief good who Love disclaim,
And barter pure delight for glory's empty name!

Blest Psyche! thou hast 'scaped the tyrants power!
Thy gentle heart shall never know the pain
Which tortures pride in his most prosperous hour:
Yet dangers still unsung for thee remain;
Nor must thou unmolested hope to gain
Immortal beauty's never failing spring;
Oh! no—nor yet tranquillity attain:
But though thy heart the pangs of doubt may sting,
Thy faithful knight shall yet thy steps in safety bring.

Warned by late peril now she scarcely dares
Quit for one moment his protecting eye:
Sure in his sight, her soul of nought despairs,
And nought looks dreadful when that arm is nigh
On which her hopes with confidence rely;
By his advice their constant course they bend,
He points where hidden danger they should fly,
On him securely, as her heaven-sent friend,
She bids her grateful heart contentedly depend.

Oh! who the exquisite delight can tell,
The joy which mutual confidence imparts!
Or who can paint the charm unspeakable
Which links in tender bands two faithful hearts?
In vain assailed by fortune's envious darts,
Their mitigated woes are sweetly shared,
And doubled joy reluctantly departs:
Let but the sympathising heart be spared,
What sorrow seems not light, what peril is not dared?

Oh! never may suspicion's gloomy sky
Chill the sweet glow of fondly trusting love!
Nor ever may he feel the scowling eye
Of dark distrust his confidence reprove!
In pleasing error may I rather rove,
With blind reliance on the hand so dear,
Than let cold prudence from my eyes remove
Those sweet delusions, where nor doubt nor fear
Nor foul disloyalty nor cruel change appear.

The noble mind is ever prone to trust;
Yet love with fond anxiety is joined;
And timid tenderness is oft unjust;
The coldness which it dreads too prompt to find,
And torture the too susceptible mind.
Hence rose the gloom which oft o'er Psyche stole
Lest he she loved, unmindful or unkind,
Should careless slight affection's soft control,
Or she long absent lose her influence o'er his soul.

'Twas evening, and the shades which sudden fell
Seemed to forebode a dark unlovely night;
The sighing wood-nymphs from their caves foretel
The storm which soon their quiet shall affright:
Nor cheering star nor moon appears in sight,
Nor taper twinkles through the rustling leaves
And sheds afar its hospitable light:
But hark! a dismal sound the ear receives,
And through the obscuring gloom the eye strange forms perceives.

It was a helpless female who exclaimed,
Whose blind and aged form an ass sustained:
Misshaped and timorous, of light ashamed,
In darksome woods her hard-earned food she gained,
And her voracious appetite maintained,
Though all devouring, yet unsatisfied;
Nor aught of hard digestion she disdained,
Whate'er was offered greedily she tried,
And meanly served, as slave, whoever food supplied.

A cruel monster now her steps pursued,
Well known of yore and named the Blatant Beast;
And soon he seized his prey with grasp so rude,
So fiercely on her feeble body prest,
That had the courteous knight not soon released
Her unresisting limbs from violence,
She must have sunk by his rough jaws opprest:
The spiteful beast, enraged at the defence,
Now turned upon the knight with foaming vehemence.

But, when his fury felt the couched spear,
On Psyche's unarmed form he bellowing flew;
'Twas there alone the knight his rage could fear;
Swifter than thought his flaming sword he drew,
And from his hand the doubtful javelin threw
Lest erring it might wound the trembling fair:
Eager the cruel monster to subdue
He scorned to use his shield's protecting care,
And rashly left his side in part exposed and bare.

Sharp were the wounds of his avenging steel,
Which forced the roaring beast to quit the field:
Yet ere he fled, the knight unused to feel
The power of any foe, or e'er to yield
To any arm which sword or spear could wield,
Perceived the venom of his tooth impure;
But, with indignant silence, unrevealed
The pain he bore, while through the gloom obscure
The beast, in vain pursued, urged on his flight secure.

And now the hag, delivered from her fear,
Her grateful thanks upon the knight bestowed,
And, as they onward went, in Psyche's ear
Her tongue with many a horrid tale o'erflowed,
Which warned her to forsake that venturous road,
And seek protection in the neighbouring grove;
Where dwelt a prudent dame, who oft bestowed
Her sage advice, when pilgrims doomed to rove,
Benighted there, had else with lurking dangers strove.

The knight now softly bade his charge beware,
Nor trust Credulity whom well he knew:
Yet he himself, harassed with pain and care,
And heedful of the storm which fiercer grew,
Yielded, a path more sheltered to pursue:
Now soon entangled in a gloomy maze
Psyche no longer has her knight in view,
Nor sees his page's star-crowned helmet blaze;
Close at her side alone the hag loquacious stays.

Fearful she stops, and calls aloud in vain,
The storm-roused woods roar only in reply;
Anxious her loved protector to regain
She trembling listens to Credulity,
Who points where they a glimmering light may spy;
Which, through the shade of intervening trees
And all the misty blackness of the sky,
Casting a weak and dubious ray she sees,
And fain by this would seek her terrors to appease.

Yet hoping that, allured by that same light
Which singly seemed through all the gloom to shine,
She there at last might meet her wandering knight,
Thither her footsteps doubtingly incline
As best the uncertain path they could divine,
All tangled as it wound through brake and briar:
While to affright her soul at once combine
A thousand shapeless forms of terror dire,
Here shrieks the ill-omened bird, there glares the meteor's fire.

In the deep centre of the mazy wood,
With matted ivy and wild vine o'ergrown,
A Gothic castle solitary stood,
With massive walls built firm of murky stone;
Long had Credulity its mistress known,
Meagre her form and tawny was her hue,
Unsociably she lived, unloved, alone,
No cheerful prospects gladdened e'er her view,
And her pale hollow eyes oblique their glances threw.

Now had they reached the sad and dreary bower
Where dark Disfida held her gloomy state:
The grated casements strong with iron power,
The huge port-cullis creaking o'er the gate,
The surly guards that round the draw-bridge wait,
Chill Psyche's heart with sad foreboding fears;
Nor ever had she felt so desolate
As when at length her guide the porter hears,
And at the well known call reluctantly appears.

In hall half lighted with uncertain rays,
Such as expiring tapers transient shed,
The gloomy princess sat, no social blaze
The unkindled hearth supplied, no table spread
Cheered the lone guest who weetless wandered,
But melancholy silence reigned around,
While on her arm she leaned her pensive head,
And anxious watched, as sullenly she frowned,
Of distant whispers low to catch the doubtful sound.

Startled to hear an unaccustomed noise
Sudden she rose, and on the intruders bent
Her prying eye askance; but soon the voice
Of her old slave appeased her discontent,
And a half welcome to her guests she lent:
Her frequent questions satisfied at last,
Through all the neighbouring woods her scouts she sent
To seek the knight, while Psyche's tears flowed fast,
And all the live-long night in anxious woe she past.

The sullen bell had told the midnight hour,
And sleep had laid the busy world to rest,
All but the watchful lady of that bower
And wretched Psyche: her distracted breast
The agony of sad suspense opprest,
Now to the casement eagerly she flies,
And now the wished-for voice her fancy blest:
Alas! the screaming night-bird only cries;
Only the drear obscure there meets her straining eyes.

Has thy heart sickened with deferred hope?
Or felt the impatient anguish of suspense?
Or hast thou tasted of the bitter cup
Which disappointment's withered hands dispense?
Thou knowest the poison which o'erflowed from hence
O'er Psyche's tedious, miserable hours.
The unheeded notes of plaintive Innocence
No longer sooth her soul with wonted powers,
While false Disfida's tales her listening ear devours.

Of rapid torrents and deep marshy fens,
Of ambushed foes and unseen pits they tell,
Of ruffians rushing from their secret dens,
Of foul magicians and of wizard spell,
The poisoned lance and net invisible;
While Psyche shuddering sees her knight betrayed
Into the snares of some enchanter fell,
Beholds him bleeding in the treacherous shade,
Or hears his dying voice implore in vain for aid.

At length the cruel messengers return,
Their trampling steeds sound welcome in her ear;
Her rapid feet the ground impatient spurn,
As eagerly she flies their news to hear.
Alas! they bring no tidings which may cheer
Her sorrowing soul opprest, disconsolate!
" Dismiss," they cry, " each idly timid fear!
" No dangers now thy faithless knight await,
" Lured by a wanton fair to bowers of peaceful state.

" We saw him blithely follow where she led,
" And urged him to return to thee in vain:
" Some other knight, insultingly he said,
" Thy charms might soon for thy protection gain,
" If still resolved to tread with weary pain
" The tedious road to that uncertain land;
" But he should there contentedly remain;
" No other bliss could now his heart demand
" Than that new lady's love and kindly proffered hand."

A while she stood in silent wonder lost,
And scarce believes the strange abandonment;
No fears like this her heart had ever crost,
Nor could she think his mind so lightly bent
Could swerve so quickly from its first intent;
Till sudden bursting forth in angry mood
Disfida gave her indignation vent,
" Ah, well I know," she cried, " that wicked brood
" Whose cursed ensnaring arts in vain my cares withstood,

" Vile Varia's fickle and inconstant train,
" Perpetual torments of my harassed days:
" Their nightly thefts my fruits, my flowers sustain,
" Their wanton goats o'er all my vineyards graze,
" My corn lies scattered, and my fences blaze,
" My friends, my followers they basely lure;
" I know their mischievous detested ways!
" My castle vainly have I built so sure
" While from their treacherous wiles my life is insecure.

" But I will lead thee to the glittering sands,
" Where shines their hollow many-coloured fane:
" There, as the circling group fantastic stands,
" Thy truant knight perhaps thou mayst regain
" From the light arts of that seductive train."
She paused—but Psyche spoke not in reply;
Her noble heart, which swelled with deep disdain,
Forbad the utterance of a single sigh,
And shamed the indignant tear which started to her eye.

At length with firm, but gentle dignity
And cold averted eye she thus replies:
" No! let him go: nor power nor wish have I
" His conduct to control. Let this suffice;
" Before my path a surer guardian flies,
" By whose direction onward I proceed
" Soon as the morn's first light shall clear the skies."
She ceased, then languishing her griefs to feed,
Her cold dark chamber sought from observation freed.

'Twas there regret indulged the bitter tear;
She feels herself forsaken and alone:
" Behold," she cries, " fulfilled is every fear,
" Oh! wretched Psyche, now indeed undone!
" Thy love's protecting care no more is shown,
" He bids his servant leave thee to thy fate,
" Nor longer will the hopeless wanderer own:
" Some fairer, nobler spouse, some worthier mate,
" At length by Venus given shall share his heavenly state.

" Oh! most adored! Oh! most regretted love!
" Oh! joys that never must again be mine,
" And thou lost hope, farewell!—vainly I rove,
" For never shall I reach that land divine,
" Nor ever shall thy beams celestial shine
" Again upon my sad unheeded way!
" Oh! let me here with life my woes resign,
" Or in this gloomy den for ever stay,
" And shun the scornful world, nor see detested day."

" But no! those scenes are hateful to mine eyes,
" And all who spoke or witnessed my disgrace;
" My soul with horror from this dwelling flies
" And seeks some tranquil, solitary place
" Where grief may finish life's unhappy race!"
So past she the long night, and soon as morn
Had first begun to show his cheerful face,
Her couch, which care had strewn with every thorn,
With heavy heart she left, disquieted, forlorn.

Not thus Disfida suffered her to part,
But urged her there in safety to remain,
Repeating oft to her foreboding heart
That fairy land she never could attain:
But when she saw dissuasion was in vain,
And Psyche bent her journey to pursue,
With angry brow she called a trusty train
And bade them keep the imprudent fair in view,
And guard her dangerous path with strict observance true.

In vain their proffered service she declines,
And dreads the convoy of the scowling band;
Their hateful presence with her loss combines.
She feels betrayed to the destroyer's hand,
And trembling wanders o'er the dreary land;
While as she seeks to escape Disfida's power,
Her efforts still the officious guards withstand,
Led in vain circles many a tedious hour,
Undistanced still she sees the gloomy turrets lower.

Till wearied with her fruitless way, at length
Upon the ground her fainting limbs she threw;
No wish remained to aid exhausted strength,
The mazy path she cared not to pursue,
Since unavailing was the task she knew:
Her murmuring guards to seek for food prepare,
Yet mindful of their charge, still keep in view
The drooping victim of their cruel care,
Who sees the day decline in terror and despair.

Hark! a low hollow groan she seems to hear
Repeated oft; wondering she looks around:
It seemed to issue from some cavern near,
Or low hut hidden by the rising ground;
For, though it seemed the melancholy sound
Of human voice, no human form was nigh;
Her eye no human habitation found,
But as she listening gazed attentively,
Her shuddering ears received the deep and long drawn sigh.

The guard who nearest stood now whispering said,
"If aught of doubt remain within thy mind,
"Or wish to know why thus thou wert betrayed,
"Or what strange cause thy faithless knight inclined
"To leave the charge he with such scorn resigned,
"Each curious thought thou now mayst satisfy,
"Since here the entrance of a cave we find,
"Where dwells, deep hid from day's too garish eye,
"A sage whose magic skill can solve each mystery."

He staid not her reply, but urged her on
Reluctant to the dark and dreary cave;
No beam of cheerful Heaven had ever shone
In the recesses of that gloomy grave,
Where screaming owls their daily dwelling crave.
One sickly lamp the wretched master shewed;
Devouring fiend! Who now the prey shall save
From his fell gripe, whose hands in blood imbrued,
In his own bosom seek his lacerated food?

On the damp ground he sits in sullen woe,
But wildly rolls around his frenzied eye,
And gnaws his withered lips, which still o'erflow
With bitter gall; in foul disorder lie
His black and matted locks; anxiety
Sits on his wrinkled brow and sallow cheek;
The wasted form, the deep-drawn, frequent sigh,
Some slow consuming malady bespeak,
But medicinal skill the cause in vain shall seek.

" Behold," the treacherous guard exclaimed, " behold,
" At length Disfida sends thy promised bride!
" Let her, deserted by her knight, be told
" What peerless lady lured him from her side;
" Thy cares her future safety must provide."
Smiling maliciously as thus he spoke,
He seemed her helpless anguish to deride;
Then swiftly rushing from the den he broke,
Ere from the sudden shock astonished she awoke.

She too had fled; but when the wretch escaped
He closed the cavern's mouth with cruel care;
And now the monster placed his form mis-shaped
To bar the passage of the affrighted fair:
Her spirits die, she breathes polluted air,
And vaporous visions swim before her sight:
His magic skill the sorcerer bids her share,
And lo! as in a glass, she sees her knight
In bower remembered well, the bower of loose Delight.

But oh! what words her feelings can impart!
Feelings to hateful envy near allied!
While on her knight her anxious glances dart:
His plumed helmet, lo! he lays aside;
His face with torturing agony she spied,
Yet cannot from the sight her eyes remove;
No mortal knight she sees had aid supplied,
No mortal knight in her defence had strove;
'Twas Love! 'twas Love himself, her own adored Love.

Poured in soft dalliance at a lady's feet,
In fondest rapture he appeared to lie,
While her fair neck with inclination sweet
Bent o'er his graceful form her melting eye,
Which his looked up to meet in ecstasy.
Their words she heard not; words had ne'er exprest,
What well her sickening fancy could supply,
All that their silent eloquence confest,
As breathed the sigh of fire from each impassioned breast.

While thus she gazed, her quivering lips turn pale;
Contending passions rage within her breast,
Nor ever had she known such bitter bale,
Or felt by such fierce agony opprest.
Oft had her gentle heart been sore distrest,
But meekness ever has a lenient power
From anguish half his keenest darts to wrest;
Meekness for her had softened sorrow's hour,
Those furious fiends subdued which boisterous souls devour.

For there are hearts that, like some sheltered lake,
Ne'er swell with rage, nor foam with violence;
Though its sweet placid calm the tempests shake,
Yet will it ne'er with furious impotence
Dash its rude waves against the rocky fence,
Which nature placed the limits of its reign:
Thrice blest! who feel the peace which flows from hence,
Whom meek-eyed gentleness can thus restrain;
Whate'er the storms of fate, with her let none complain!

That mild associate Psyche now deserts,
Unlovely passions agitate her soul,
The vile magician all his art exerts,
And triumphs to behold his proud control:
Changed to a serpent's hideous form, he stole
O'er her fair breast to suck her vital blood;
His poisonous involutions round her roll:
Already is his forked tongue imbrued
Warm in the stream of life, her heart's pure purple flood.

Thus wretchedly she falls Geloso's prey!
But her, once more, unhoped for aid shall save!
Admitted shines the clear blue light of day
Upon the horrors of that gloomy grave;
Her knight's soft voice resounds through all the cave,
The affrighted serpent quits his deadly hold,
Nor dares the vengeance of his arm to brave,
Shrunk to a spider's form, while many a fold
Of self-spun web obscene the sorcerer vile enrolled.

Scarce had the star of his attendant youth
Blazed through the cavern and proclaimed the knight,
When all those spells and visions of untruth,
Bred in dark Erebus and nursed in night,
Dissolving vanished into vapour light;
While Psyche, quite exhausted by her pains,
And hardly trusting her astonished sight,
Now faint and speechless in his arms remains,
Nor memory of the past, nor present sense retains.

Borne from the cavern, and to life restored,
Her opening eyes behold her knight once more,
She sees whom lost with anguish she deplored;
Yet a half-feigned resentment still she bore,
Nor sign of joy her face averted wore,
Though joy unuttered panted at her heart;
In sullen silence much she pondered o'er
What from her side induced him to depart,
And all she since had seen by aid of magic art.

Was it then all a false deluding dream
That wore the semblance of celestial Love?
On this her wavering thoughts bewildered seem
At length to rest; yet onward as they move,
Though much his tender cares her doubts reprove,
And though she longs to hear, and pardon all,
Silence she still preserves: awhile he strove
Her free and cheerful spirits to recall,
But found the task was vain; his words unnoticed fall.

Now in his turn offended and surprised,
The knight in silence from her side withdrew;
With pain she marked it, but her pain disguised,
And heedless seemed her journey to pursue,
Nor backward deigned to turn one anxious view
As oft she wished; till mindful of his lord,
Constance alarmed affectionately flew,
Eager to see their mutual peace restored,
And blamed her cold reserve in many a soft breathed word.

" O Psyche! wound not thus thy faithful knight,
" Who fondly sought thee many an anxious hour,
" Though bleeding yet from that inglorious fight,
" Where thou wert rescued from the savage power
" Of that fell beast who would thy charms devour:
" Still faint with wounds, he ceased not to pursue
" Thy heedless course: let not displeasure lower
" Thus on thy brow: think not his heart untrue!
" Think not that e'er from thee he willingly withdrew!"

With self-reproach and sweet returning trust,
While yet he spoke, her generous heart replies,
Soft melting pity bids her now be just
And own the error which deceived her eyes;
Her little pride she longs to sacrifice,
And ask forgiveness of her suffering knight;
Her suffering knight, alas! no more she spies,
He has withdrawn offended from her sight,
Nor can that gentle voice now hope to stay his flight.

Struggling no more her sorrows to restrain,
Her streaming eyes look round with anxious fear;
Nor are those tender showers now shed in vain,
Her soft lamenting voice has reached his ear,
Where latent he had marked each precious tear;
Sudden as thought behold him at her feet!
Oh! reconciling moment! charm most dear!
What feeling heart thy pleasures would repeat,
Or wish thy dearly purchased bliss, however sweet?

The smiles of joy which swell her glowing cheek,
And o'er her parting lips divinely play,
Returning pleasure eloquently speak,
Forgetful of the tears which lingering stay,
(Like sparkling dew drops in a sunny day)
Unheeded tenants of rejoicing eyes;
His wounds her tender care can well repay:
There grateful kindness breathes her balmy sighs,
Beneath her lenient hand how swiftly suffering flies!

Freed from the mazes of Disfida's groves,
The opening landscape brightens to their view;
Psyche, with strength revived, now onward moves
In cheerful hope, with courage to renew
Repeated toils, and perils to pursue:
Thus when some tender plant neglected pines,
Shed o'er its pendent head the kindly dew,
How soon refreshed its vivid lustre shines!
Once more the leaf expands, the drooping tendril twines.

Thus cheered, the knight intreats her to impart
The dangers which her way had since befel,
Her timid lips refuse to speak the art
Which clothed him in a form she loved so well:
That she had thought him Love, she blushed to tell!
Confused she stopt; a gentle pause ensued;
What chance had brought him to the demon's cell
She then enquires; what course he had pursued,
And who his steps had led throughout the mazy wood.

Sooth he had much to say, though modest shame
His gallant deeds forbade him to declare;
For while through those bewildering woods he came,
Assisted by his page's active care,
He had detected Varia's wily snare,
And forced her wanton retinue to flee.
With like disgrace, malignant in despair,
Disfida's slaves their plots defeated see,
Their feeble malice scorned, their destined victims free.

But he had marked the traces of their feet,
And found the path which to the cavern led:
Whence now, rejoicing in reunion sweet,
Their way together cheerfully they tread,
Exempt awhile from danger and from dread;
While Psyche's heart, with confidence more bold,
Full oft the hour of rapture pictured,
When those celestial charms she should behold,
And feel the arms of Love once more his bride enfold.

CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

Introduction—Charm of Poetry—Psyche beholds the palace of Chastity—Pleads for the admission of her Knight—Obtains it through the intervention of Hymen—Hymn celebrating the triumphs of Chastity—Psyche, enraptured, desires to devote herself solely to the service of Chastity—Entrusted by her to the protection of the Knight—Psyche's Voyage—Tempest—Coast of Spleen—Psyche received and sheltered by Patience.

CANTO V.

DELIGHTFUL visions of my lonely hours!
Charm of my life and solace of my care!
Oh! would the muse but lend proportioned powers,
And give me language, equal to declare
The wonders which she bids my fancy share,
When rapt in her to other worlds I fly,
See angel forms unutterably fair,
And hear the inexpressive harmony
That seems to float on air, and warble through the sky.

Might I the swiftly glancing scenes recal!
Bright as the roseate clouds of summer's eve,
The dreams which hold my soul in willing thrall,
And half my visionary days deceive,
Communicable shape might then receive,
And other hearts be ravished with the strain:
But scarce I seek the airy threads to weave,
When quick confusion mocks the fruitless pain,
And all the fairy forms are vanished from my brain.

Fond dreamer! meditate thine idle song!
But let thine idle song remain unknown:
The verse, which cheers thy solitude, prolong;
What, though it charm no moments but thine own,
Though thy loved Psyche smile for thee alone,
Still shall it yield thee pleasure, if not fame,
And when, escaped from tumult, thou hast flown
To thy dear silent hearth's enlivening flame,
There shall the tranquil muse her happy votary claim!

My Psyche's wanderings then she loves to trace;
Unrols the glowing canvas to my sight;
Her chaste calm eye, her soft attractive grace,
The lightning of her heavenly smile so bright,
All yield me strange and unconceived delight:
Even now entranced her journey I pursue,
And gaze enraptured on her matchless knight;
Visions of love, pure, innocent and true!
Oh! may your graceful forms for ever bless my view!

See as they tread the green, soft-levelled plain,
Where never weed, nor noxious plant was found!
Psyche, enchanted, bids her knight explain
Who rules that lovely and well cultured ground,
Where fairest flowers and purest springs abound:
"Oh! object of my anxious cares," (he cried,
As with a half-breathed sigh he gazed around)
"A stranger here, full oft I vainly tried
"Admittance to obtain, and sooth the sovereign's pride.

" Here Castabella reigns, whose brow severe
" Oft chilled my sanguine spirit by its frown;
" Yet have I served her with adoring fear,
" Though her ungrateful scorn will oft disown
" The faithful homage by her servant shown;
" Me she hath banished from her fair domain,
" For crimes my loyal heart had never known;
" While thus excluded vainly I complain,
" And feel another's guilt my injured honour stain.

" With false assumption of my arms and name,
" Knight of the Bleeding Heart miscalled too long,
" A vile impostor has disgraced my fame,
" And much usurped by violence and wrong,
" Which to the virgin queen by right belong;
" On me her irritated vengeance falls,
" On me, repulsed by force of arms so strong
" That, never suffered to approach her walls,
" Unheard, indignant truth in vain for justice calls.

" Yet she alone our progress can assist,
" And thou, Oh Psyche! must her favour gain;
" Nor from thy soft entreaties e'er desist
" Till thou free entrance for thy knight obtain;
" Here let his faithful services remain
" Fixed on thy grateful heart! nor thou consent,
" Nor let their force thy gentleness constrain
" To leave him, thus disgraced, yet innocent,
" Thine undeserved neglect forsaken to lament."

While yet he speaks, before her ravished eyes
The brilliant towers of Castabella shine:
The sun that views them from unclouded skies
Sheds not through heaven a radiance more divine;
The adamantine walls with strength combine
Inimitable lustre ever clear;
Celestial temple! 'tis not lips like mine
Thy glories can reveal to mortal ear,
Or paint the unsullied beams which blaze for ever here.

Approaching now the well defended gates,
Which placed at distance guard the sacred fane,
Their lowly suit a stern repulse awaits;
The timid voice of Psyche pleads in vain,
Nor entrance there together can they gain:
While yet they stay, unwilling to retreat,
The dove, swift-sailing through the ethereal plain,
Has reached already Castabella's seat,
And in her spotless breast has found a welcome sweet.

Caressing oft her well remembered guest,
Serener smiles illumed her softened brow;
The heaven-sent messenger her soul confest,
And mildly listened to his murmurs low,
Which seemed in pleading eloquence to flow;
His snowy pinions then he wide displayed,
And gently lured her from her throne to go
Even to the gates, where Psyche blushing stayed
Beside her awe-struck knight half doubtingly afraid.

That form majestic might the bravest awe:
Yet Psyche gazed with love unmixed with fear,
And felt those charms her soul attracted draw
As to maternal tenderness most dear;
Congenial souls! they at one glance appear
Linked to each other by a mutual tie:
Her courteous voice invites her to draw near.
And lo! obedient to their sovereign's eye,
To Psyche's willing steps the barriers open fly.

But to the lion, and his gallant lord
Sudden the affrighted guards the portals close.
Psyche looks back, and mindful of her word,
Mindful of him who saved her from her foes,
Guide of her course and soother of her woes,
The tear that started to her downcast eye,
The deepening blush which eloquently rose,
Silent assistant of the pleading sigh,
To speed the unuttered suit their powers persuasive try.

And now the knight, encouraged to approach,
Asserts his injured fame, and justice claims,
Confutes each charge, repels each foul reproach,
And each accusing falsehood boldly shames,
While conscious innocence his tongue inflames:
A firm attachment to her reign he vows,
The base impostor's guilty madness blames,
And, while the imputed crimes his spirit rouse,
No intercourse with him his nobler soul allows.

Mean time his faithful page had not been mute,
And he had found a ready warm ally;
For (while his master urged the eager suit)
As through the goodly train he cast his eye,
He chanced exulting mid the group to spy
A joyous youth, his fondly cherished friend;
Hymen, the festive, love-attending boy,
Delighted his assistance hastes to lend,
Laughing unbars the gates, and bids the parley end.

Around their queen the timid virgins crowd,
Who half consentingly receives the knight,
And checks her sportive boy, whose welcome loud
Speaks his gay triumph and his proud delight:
Yet graceful smiles her happy guests invite
To share the feast with sacred honours blest;
The palace opens to their dazzled sight;
Still as they gazed, the adoring eye confest
That wondering awe which filled each consecrated breast.

All was divine, yet still the fairest queen
Like Dian mid her circling nymphs appeared,
Or as Minerva on Parnassus seen,
When condescendingly with smiles she cheered
The silent Muses who her presence feared:
A starry crown its heavenly radiance threw
O'er her pale cheek; for there the rose revered
The purer lilies of her saint-like hue,
Yet oft the mantling blush its transient visits knew.

The hand of Fate, which wove of spotless white
Her wondrous robe, bade it unchangeable
Preserve unsullied its first lustre bright,
Nor e'er might be renewed that sacred spell
If once destroyed; wherefore to guard it well
Two hand-maids she entrusts with special care,
Prudence and Purity, who both excel,
The first in matron dignity of air,
The last in blooming youth unalterably fair.

Favourite of heaven! she at her birth received
With it the brilliant zone that bound her waist,
Which, were the earth of sun and stars bereaved,
By its own light beneficently cast
Could cheer the innocent, and guide the chaste:
Nor armour ever had the virgin bore,
Though oft in warlike scenes her youth she past,
For while her breast this dazzling cestus wore,
The foe who dared to gaze beheld the light no more.

But when her placid hours in peace are spent,
Concealed she bids its latent terrors lie,
Sheathed in a silken scarf, with kind intent
Wove by the gentle hand of Modesty;
And see, the blushing maid with down-cast eye
Behind her mistress hides her charms retired!
While, foremost of the group, of stature high,
Firm Courage lifts her brow by Truth inspired,
Who holds a crystal lamp in flames celestial fired.

See, fresh as Hebe blooming Temperance stand,
Present the nectared fruits, and crown the bowl!
While bright-eyed Honour leads the choral band,
Whose songs divine can animate the soul,
Led willing captive to their high control:
They sing the triumphs of their spotless queen,
And proudly bid immortal fame enrol
Upon her fairest page such as had been
The champions of her cause, the favourites of her reign.

From Pallas first begins the lofty song,
And Cynthia, brightest goddess of the skies;
To her the virgin deities belong,
And each beholds her with a sister's eyes;
The mystic honours next of Fauna rise;
Her solemn rites which purest hands require;
And Vesta, who her virgins taught to prize,
And guard the sacred symbols of the fire
Which earth could ne'er revive if suffered to expire.

Emblem divine of female purity!
Whose trust betrayed to like sad fate shall doom;
Pursued by scorn, consigned to infamy,
The hapless victims perish in their bloom
Mid the dark horrors of a living tomb;
Effulgent queen! thou wilt the pure defend
From the dark night of this opprobrious gloom;
Nor even with life thy favouring smiles shall end,
They bid illustrious fame beyond the grave extend.

First of the noble youths whose virtue shone
Conspicuous chief in Castabella's train,
They sing the firm unmoved Bellerophon;
And Peleus flying the Magnesian plain,
Pursued by all a wanton's fierce disdain.
You too, Hippolytus, their songs employ!
Beloved by Phædra, but beloved in vain;
With the chaste honours of the Hebrew boy,
Which time shall ne'er obscure, nor idle scorn destroy.

Nor was unsung whom on Hymettus' brow
The bright Aurora wooed with amorous care;
He, mindful of his sacred nuptial vow,
Refused the goddess though celestial fair,
Breathing pure perfumes and ambrosial air:
Of wanton Circe's baffled arts they tell,
And him, too wise her treacherous cup to share,
Who scorned the enchantress, and her mystic spell,
And all the Syrens' arts could gloriously repel.

The long tried virtue of his faithful spouse
Now sweetly animates the tuneful string,
Unsullied guardian of her virgin vows!
Who twice ten years had wept her wandering king.
Acastus' mourning daughter next they sing;
The chaste embrace which clasped her husband's shade:
And thee, Dictynna! who, with daring spring,
Called from the Cretan rock on Dian's aid:
And still the goddess loves her favourite luckless maid.

Pleased to assume herself a name so dear
She bids her altars to Dictynna rise,
Thus called, she ever turns, with willing ear,
To aid each nymph who for her succour cries.
See how the trembling Arethusa flies
Through pathless woods, o'er rocks and open plains;
In vain to escape the ravisher she tries,
Fast on her rapid flight Alpheus gains,
And scarce her fainting strength the unequal course sustains.

And now more near his dreaded step she hears,
His lengthened shadow flies before her feet,
Now o'er her neck his panting breath appears
To part her locks, which, in disorder sweet,
Ambitious seemed to fan the fervid heat
That flushed her glowing cheek and heightened charms:
Hear how her gasping sighs for aid entreat!
"Dictynna! pitying see my just alarms,
"And snatch thy fainting maid from those polluting arms."

The goddess hears, and in a favouring cloud
Conceals her suppliant from Alpheus' sight;
In vain he looks around, and calls aloud,
And wondering seeks the traces of her flight:
Enveloped, still she views him with affright,
An icy coldness creeps o'er all her frame,
And soon, dissolving in a current bright,
The silver stream retains her honoured name,
And still unmingled flows, and guards its virgin fame.

'Twas thus Castalia's sacred fountain sprung,
Once a fair nymph by bright Apollo loved:
To Daphne too his amorous strain he sung,
But sung in vain: her heart remained unmoved,
No vain delight her modest virtue proved
To be the theme of all his wanton lays:
To shun the god the silvan scene she roved;
Nor prized the flattery of his tuneful praise,
Nor one relenting smile his splendid gifts could raise.

Yet were his lips with eloquence endued,
And melting passion warbled o'er his lyre,
And had she yielding listened as he wooed,
The virgin sure had caught the kindling fire,
And fallen a victim to impure desire;
For safety cautious flight alone remained,
While tears of trembling innocence require
Her parents aid: and lo! that aid obtained,
How suddenly her charms immortal laurels gained!

Dear to the Muses still her honours live:
And they too glory in their virgin name;
To pure delights their tranquil hours they give,
And fear to mingle with a grosser flame
The chaster fires which heaven hath bid them claim:
They smiled when Pan, on Ladon's banks deceived,
The fair Syringa clasped, who, snatched from shame,
Already had her tuneful form received,
And to the breathing winds in airy music grieved.

Still in that tuneful form to Dian dear
She bids it injured innocence befriend;
Commands her train the sentence to revere,
And in her grove the vocal reeds suspend
Which Virtue may from calumny defend:
Self-breathed, when virgin purity appears,
What notes melodious they spontaneous send!
While the rash guilty nymph with horror hears
Deep groans declare her shame to awe-struck wondering ears.

The spotless virgins shall unhurt approach
The stream's rude ordeal, and the sacred fire.
See the pure maid, indignant of reproach,
The dreadful test of innocence require
Amid the holy priests and virgin choir!
See her leap fearless on the blazing shrine!
The lambent flames, bright-circling, all aspire
Innoxious wreathes around her form to twine,
And crown with lustrous beams the virgin's brow divine.

Nor was the daring Clusia then unsung,
Who plunged illustrious from the lofty tower;
The favouring winds around the virgin clung,
And bore her harmless from the tyrant's power:
Nor those, whom Vesta in the trying hour
Protects from slander, and restores to fame;
Nor Clelia, shielded from the arrowy shower;
Nor thou! whose purest hands the Sibyls claim,
And bid the modest fane revere Sulpicia's name.

O'er her soft cheek how arch the dimples play,
While pleased the goddess hears Sinope's wiles!
How oft she mocked the changeful lord of day,
And many a silvan god who sought her smiles:
But chief when Jove her innocence beguiles;
"Grant me a boon," the blushing maid replies,
Urged by his suit: hope o'er his amorous toils
Exulting dawns:—"thine oath is past," she cries;
"Unalterably pure thy spotless virgin dies!"

Rome shall for ages boast Lucretia's name!
And while its temples moulder into dust
Still triumph in Virginia's rescued fame,
And Scipio's victory over baffled lust:—
Even now the strain prophetically just,
In unborn servants bids their queen rejoice,
And in her British beauties firmly trust;
Thrice happy fair! who still adore her voice,
The blushing virgin's law, the modest matron's choice!

Psyche with ravished ear the strain attends,
Enraptured hangs upon the heaven-strung lyre;
Her kindling soul from sensual earth ascends;
To joys divine her purer thoughts aspire;
She longs to join the white robed spotless choir,
And there for ever dwell a hallowed guest:
Even Love himself no longer can inspire
The wishes of the soft enthusiast's breast,
Who, filled with sacred zeal, would there for ever rest;

Despising every meaner low pursuit,
And quite forgetful of her amorous care,
All heedless of her knight, who sad and mute
With wonder hears the strange ungrateful fair,
A prostrate suppliant, pour the fervent prayer
To be received in Castabella's train,
And that in tranquil bliss secluded there,
Her happy votary still she might remain,
Free from each worldly care, and each polluting stain.

With gracious smile the Queen her favourite heard,
And fondly raised, and clasped her to her breast;
A beam of triumph in her eye appeared,
While ardent Psyche offered her request,
Which to the indignant knight her pride confest:
" Farewell, mistaken Psyche!" he exclaims,
Rising at length with grief and shame opprest,
" Since thy false heart a spouse divine disclaims,
" I leave thee to the pomp which here thy pride enflames."

" Yet stay, impetuous youth," the Queen replies,
Abashed, irresolute as Psyche stands,
" My favourite's happiness too dear I prize,
" Far other services my soul demands
" Than those which here in these sequestered lands
" Her zeal would pay: no, let her bear my fame
" Even to the bowers where Love himself commands:
" There shall my votary reign secure from blame,
" And teach his myrtle groves to echo to my name.

" My lovely servant still defend from harms,
" And stem with her yon strong opposing tide:
" Haste, bear her safely to her lover's arms!
" Be it thy care with steady course to guide
" The light-winged bark I will myself provide.
" Depart in peace! thou chosen of my heart!
" Leave not thy faithful knight's protecting side.
" Dear to me both, oh may no treacherous art
" Your kindred souls divide, your fair alliance part!

" Here rest to-night! to-morrow shall prepare
" The vessel which your destined course shall speed.
" Lo! I consign my Psyche to thy care,
" Oh gallant youth! for so hath Fate decreed,
" And Love himself shall pay the generous meed."
She said, and joined their unreluctant hands.
The grateful knight, from fear and sorrow freed,
Receives with hope revived the dear commands,
And Psyche's modest eye no other law demands.

Now Peace with downy step and silent hand
Prepares for each the couch of soft repose:
Fairest attendant! she with whispers bland
Bids the obedient eye in slumbers close;
She too the first at early morning goes
With light-foot Cheerfulness the guests to greet,
Who soothed by quiet dreams refreshed arose,
Ready the labours of the day to meet;
But first due homage pay at Castabella's feet.

Bright was the prospect which before them shone;
Gay danced the sun-beams o'er the trembling waves:
Who that the faithless ocean had not known,
Which now the strand in placid whispers laves,
Could e'er believe the rage with which it raves
When angry Boreas bids the storm arise,
And calls his wild winds from their wintry caves?
Now soft Favonius breathes his gentlest sighs,
Auspicious omens wait, serenely smile the skies.

The eager mariners now seize the oar,
The streamers flutter in the favouring gale.
Nor unattended did they leave the shore:
Hymen, whose smiles shall o'er mischance prevail,
Sits at the helm, or spreads the swelling sail:
Swift through the parting waves the vessel flies,
And now at distance scarce can Psyche hail
The shore, so fast receding from her eyes,
Or bless the snowy cliffs which o'er the coast arise.

Pleased with her voyage and the novel scene,
Hope's vivid ray her cheerful heart expands:
Delighted now she eyes the blue serene,
The purple hills, and distant rising lands,
Or, when the sky the silver queen commands,
In pleasing silence listens to the oar
Dashed by the frequent stroke of equal hands;
Or asks her knight if yet the promised shore
May bless her longing eyes when morn shall light restore?

The impatient question oft repeated thus
He smiling hears, and still with many a tale,
Or song of heavenly lore unknown to us
Beguiles the live-long night, or flagging sail
When the fresh breeze begins their bark to fail.
Strong ran the tide against the vessel's course,
And much they need the kind propitious gale
Steady to bear against its rapid force,
And aid the labouring oars, their tedious last resource.

But lo! the blackening surface of the deep
With sullen murmurs now begins to swell,
On ruffled wing the screaming sea fowl sweep
The unlovely surge, and piteous seem to tell
How from the low-hung clouds with fury fell
The demons of the tempest threatening rage;
There, brooding future terrors, yet they dwell,
Till with collected force dread war they wage,
And in convulsive gusts the adverse winds engage.

The trembling Psyche, supplicating Heaven,
Lifts to the storm her fate-deploring eye,
Sees o'er her head the livid lightnings driven:
Then, turned in horror from the blazing sky,
Clings to her knight in speechless agony:
He all his force exerts the bark to steer,
And bids the mariners each effort try
To escape the rocky coast which threatens near,
For Hymen taught the youth that dangerous shore to fear.

Who has not listened to his tuneful lay,
That sings so well the hateful cave of Spleen?
Those lands, submitted to her gloomy sway,
Now open to their view a dreary scene,
As the sad subjects of the sullen queen
Hang o'er the cliffs, and blacken all the strand;
And where the entrance of the cave is seen
A peevish, fretful, melancholy band,
Her ever wrangling slaves, in jarring concert stand.

Driven by the hurricane they touch the shore,
The frowning guards prepare to seize their prey,
The knight (attentive to the helm no more)
Resumes his arms, and bids his shield display
Its brilliant orb: " Psyche, let no dismay
" Possess thy gentle breast," he cheerly cries,
" Behind thy knight in fearless safety stay,
" Smile at the dart which o'er thee vainly flies,
" Secure from each attack their powerless rage despise.

" Soon shall the fury of the winds be past,
" Serener skies shall brighten to our view,
" Let us not yield to the imperious blast
" Which now forbids our vessel to pursue
" Its purposed course; soon shall the heavens renew
" Their calm clear smile; and soon our coward foes,
" Despairing thus our courage to subdue,
" Shall cease their idle weapons to oppose,
" And unmolested peace restore our lost repose."

Still as he spoke, where'er he turned his shield
The darts drop quivering from each slackened bow,
Unnerved each arm, no force remains to wield
The weighty falchion, or the javelin throw;
Each voice half choked expires in murmurs low,
A dizzy mist obscures their wondering sight,
Their eyes no more their wonted fury know,
With stupid awe they gaze upon the knight,
Or, as his voice they hear, trembling disperse in flight.

Yet raged the storm with unabated power;
A little creek the labouring vessel gains;
There they resolve to endure the blustering hour,
The dashing billows, and the beating rains.
Soon as the bark the sheltering bay attains,
And in the shallows moored securely rides,
Attentive still to soften all her pains,
The watchful knight for Psyche's ease provides;
Some fisher's hut perchance the shelving harbour hides.

Deep in the steril bank a grotto stood,
Whose winding caves repel the inclement air,
Worn in the hollowed rock by many a flood
And sounding surge that dashed its white foam there,
The refuge now of a defenceless fair,
Who issuing thence, with courteous kind intent
Approached the knight, and kindly bad him share
Whatever good indulgent heaven had lent
To cheer her hapless years in lonely suffering spent.

More sweet than health's fresh bloom the wan hue seemed
Which sat upon her pallid cheek; her eye,
Her placid eye, with dove-like softness beamed;
Her head unshielded from the pitiless sky,
Loose to the rude wild blast her tresses fly,
Bare were her feet which prest the shelly shore
With firm unshrinking step; while smilingly
She eyes the dashing billows as they roar,
And braves the boisterous storms so oft endured before.

Long had she there in silent sorrow dwelt,
And many a year resigned to grief had known ;
Spleen's cruel insolence she oft had felt,
But never would the haughty tyrant own,
Nor heed the darts which, from a distance thrown,
Screened by her cavern she could safely shun ;
The thorny brakes she trod for food alone,
Drank the cold stream which near the grotto run,
And bore the winter's frosts and scorching summer's sun.

In early youth, exchanging mutual vows,
Courage had wooed and won his lovely bride ;
Tossed on those stormy seas, her daring spouse
From her fond arms the cruel waves divide,
And dashed her fainting on that rock's rough side.
Still hope she keeps, and still her constant heart
Expects to hail with each returning tide
His dear remembered bark ; hence can no art
From those unlovely scenes induce her to depart.

When the vexed seas their stormy mountains roll,
She loves the shipwrecked mariner to cheer;
The trembling wretch escaped from Spleen's control,
Deep in her silent cell conceals his fear,
And panting finds repose and refuge here;
Benevolently skilled each wound to heal,
To her the sufferer flies, with willing ear
She wooes them all their anguish to reveal,
And while she speaks, they half forget the woes they feel.

Now to her cave has Patience gently brought
Psyche, yet shuddering at the fearful blast,
Largely she heaped with hospitable thought
The blazing pile, and spread the pure repast;
O'er her chilled form her own soft mantle cast,
And soothed her wearied spirits to repose,
Till all the fury of the storm is past,
Till swift receding clouds the heavens disclose,
And o'er subsiding waves pacific sunshine glows.

CANTO VI.

ARGUMENT.

Introduction—The power of Love to soften adversity—Exhortation to guard Love from the attacks of Ill-temper, which conduct to Indifference and Disgust—Psyche becalmed—Psyche surprised and carried to the Island of Indifference—Pursued and rescued by her Knight—The Voyage concluded—Psyche brought home beholds again the Temple of Love—Is reunited to her Lover, and invited by Venus to receive in Heaven her Apotheosis—Conclusion.

CANTO VI.

When pleasure sparkles in the cup of youth,
And the gay hours on downy wing advance,
Oh! then 'tis sweet to hear the lip of truth
Breathe the soft vows of love, sweet to entrance
The raptured soul by intermingling glance
Of mutual bliss; sweet amid roseate bowers,
Led by the hand of Love, to weave the dance,
Or unmolested crop life's fairy flowers,
Or bask in joy's bright sun through calm unclouded hours

Yet they, who light of heart in may-day pride
Meet love with smiles and gaily amorous song,
(Though he their softest pleasures may provide,
Even then when pleasures in full concert throng)
They cannot know with what enchantment strong
He steals upon the tender suffering soul,
What gently soothing charms to him belong,
How melting sorrow owns his soft control,
Subsiding passions hushed in milder waves to roll.

When vexed by cares and harassed by distress,
The storms of fortune chill thy soul with dread,
Let Love, consoling Love! still sweetly bless,
And his assuasive balm benignly shed:
His downy plumage o'er thy pillow spread
Shall lull thy weeping sorrows to repose;
To Love the tender heart hath ever fled,
As on its mother's breast the infant throws
Its sobbing face, and there in sleep forgets its woes.

Oh! fondly cherish then the lovely plant,
Which lenient Heaven hath given thy pains to ease;
Its lustre shall thy summer hours enchant,
And load with fragrance every prosperous breeze,
And when rude winter shall thy roses seize,
When nought through all thy bowers but thorns
remain,
This still with undeciduous charms shall please,
Screen from the blast and shelter from the rain,
And still with verdure, cheer the desolated plain.

Through the hard season Love with plaintive note
Like the kind red-breast tenderly shall sing,
Which swells mid dreary snows its tuneful throat,
Brushing the cold dews from its shivering wing,
With cheerful promise of returning spring
To the mute tenants of the leafless grove.
Guard thy best treasure from the venomed sting
Of baneful peevishness; oh! never prove
How soon ill-temper's power can banish gentle Love!

Repentance may the storms of passion chase,
And Love, who shrunk affrighted from the blast,
May hush his just complaints in soft embrace,
And smiling wipe his tearful eye at last:
Yet when the wind's rude violence is past,
Look what a wreck the scattered fields display!
See on the ground the withering blossoms cast!
And hear sad Philomel with piteous lay
Deplore the tempest's rage that swept her young away.

The tears capricious beauty loves to shed,
The pouting lip, the sullen silent tongue,
May wake the impassioned lovers tender dread,
And touch the spring that clasps his soul so strong;
But ah, beware! the gentle power too long
Will not endure the frown of angry strife;
He shuns contention, and the gloomy throng
Who blast the joys of calm domestic life,
And flies when discord shakes her brand with quarrels rife.

Oh! he will tell you that these quarrels bring
The ruin, not renewal of his flame:
If oft repeated, lo! on rapid wing
He flies to hide his fair but tender frame;
From violence, reproach, or peevish blame
Irrevocably flies. Lament in vain!
Indifference comes the abandoned heart to claim,
Asserts for ever her repulsive reign,
Close followed by disgust and all her chilling train.

Indifference, dreaded power! what art shall save
The good so cherished from thy grasping hand?
How shall young Love escape the untimely grave
Thy treacherous arts prepare? or how withstand
The insidious foe, who with her leaden band
Enchains the thoughtless, slumbering deity?
Ah, never more to wake! or e'er expand
His golden pinions to the breezy sky,
Or open to the sun his dim and languid eye.

Who can describe the hopeless, silent pang
With which the gentle heart first marks her sway?
Eyes the sure progress of her icy fang
Resistless, slowly fastening on her prey;
Sees rapture's brilliant colours fade away,
And all the glow of beaming sympathy;
Anxious to watch the cold averted ray
That speaks no more to the fond meeting eye
Enchanting tales of love, and tenderness, and joy.

Too faithful heart! thou never canst retrieve
Thy withered hopes: conceal the cruel pain!
O'er thy lost treasure still in silence grieve;
But never to the unfeeling ear complain:
From fruitless struggles dearly bought refrain!
Submit at once—the bitter task resign,
Nor watch and fan the expiring flame in vain;
Patience, consoling maid, may yet be thine,
Go seek her quiet cell, and hear her voice divine!

But lo! the joyous sun, the soft-breathed gales
By zephyrs sent to kiss the placid seas,
Curl the green wave, and fill the swelling sails;
The seamen's shouts, which jocund hail the breeze,
Call the glad knight the favouring hour to seize.
Her gentle hostess Psyche oft embraced,
Who still solicitous her guest to please
On her fair breast a talisman had placed,
And with the valued gem her parting blessing graced.

How gaily now the bark pursues its way
Urged by the steady gale! while round the keel
The bubbling currents in sweet whispers play,
Their force repulsive now no more they feel;
No clouds the unsullied face of heaven conceal,
But the clear azure one pure dome displays,
Whether it bids the star of day reveal
His potent beams, or Cynthia's milder rays
On deep cerulean skies invite the eye to gaze.

Almost unconscious they their course pursue,
So smooth the vessel cuts the watery plain;
The wide horizon to their boundless view
Gives but the sky, and Neptune's ample reign:
Still the unruffled bosom of the main
Smiles undiversified by varying wind;
No toil the idle mariners sustain,
While, listless, slumbering o'er his charge reclined,
The pilot cares no more the unerring helm to mind.

With light exulting heart glad Psyche sees
Their rapid progress as they quit the shore:
Yet weary languor steals by slow degrees
Upon her tranquil mind; she joys no more
The never changing scene to wander o'er
With still admiring eye; the enchanting song
Yields not that lively charm it knew before,
When first enraptured by his tuneful tongue
She bad her vocal knight the heavenly strain prolong.

A damp chill mist now deadens all the air,
A drowsy dullness seems o'er all to creep,
No more the heavens their smile of brightness wear,
The winds are hushed, while the dim glassy deep
Oppressed by sluggish vapours seems to sleep;
See his light scarf the knight o'er Psyche throws,
Solicitous his lovely charge to keep
From still increasing cold; while deep repose
Benumbs each torpid sense and bids her eye-lids close.

Now as with languid stroke they ply the oars,
While the dense fog obscures their gloomy way;
Hymen, well used to coast these dangerous shores,
Roused from the dreaming trance in which he lay,
Cries to the knight in voice of dread dismay,
"Steer hence thy bark, oh! yet in time beware;
"Here lies Petrea, which with baneful sway
"Glacella rules, I feel the dank cold air,
"I hear her chilling voice, methinks it speaks despair!"

Even while he speaks, behold the vessel stands
Immoveable! in vain the pilot tries
The helm to turn; fixed in the shallow strands,
No more obedient to his hand, it lies,
The disappointed oar no aid supplies
While sweeping o'er the sand it mocks their force.
The anxious knight to Constance now applies,
To his oft tried assistance has recourse,
And bids his active mind design some swift resource,

Debating doubtfully awhile they stood,
At length on their united strength rely,
To force the bark on the supporting flood;
They rouse the seamen, who half slumbering lie,
Subdued and loaded by the oppressive sky.
Then wading mid the fog, with care explore
What side the deepest waters may supply,
And where the shallows least protect the shore,
While through their darksome search the star sheds light before.

Mean time deep slumbers of the vaporous mist
Hang on the heavy eye-lids of the fair;
And Hymen too, unable to resist
The drowsy force of the o'erwhelming air,
Laid at her feet at length forgets his care.
When lo! Glacella's treacherous slaves advance,
Deep wrapt in thickest gloom; the sleeping fair
They seize, and bear away in heedless trance,
Long ere her guardian knight suspects the bitter chance.

Thus the lorn traveller imprudent sleeps
Where his high glaciers proud Locendro shews;
Thus o'er his limbs resistless torpor creeps,
As yielding to the fatal deep repose
He sinks benumbed upon the Alpine snows,
And sleeps no more to wake; no more to view
The blooming scenes his native vales disclose,
Or ever more the craggy path pursue,
Or o'er the lichened steep the chamois chase renew.

Lo! to their queen they bear their sleeping prey,
Deep in her ice-built castle's gloomy state,
There on a pompous couch they gently lay
Psyche, as yet unconscious of her fate,
And when her heavy eyes half opening late
Dimly observe the strange and unknown scenes,
As in a dream she views her changed estate,
Gazing around with doubtful, troubled mien
Now on the stupid crowd, now on their dull proud queen

With vacant smile, and words but half exprest,
In one ungracious, never-varying tone,
Glacella welcomes her bewildered guest,
And bids the chief supporter of her throne
Approach and make their mighty mistress known,
Proud Selfishness, her dark ill-favoured lord!
Her gorgeous seat, which still he shared alone,
He slowly leaves obedient to her word,
And ever as he moved the cringing train adored.

Nought of his shapeless form to sight appears,
Impenetrable furs conceal each part;
Harsh and unpleasing sounds in Psyche's ears
That voice which had subdued full many a heart;
While he, exerting every specious art,
Persuades her to adore their queen's control;
Yet would he not Glacella's name impart,
But with false title, which she artful stole
From fair Philosophy, deludes the erring soul.

"Rest, happy fair!" he cries, "who here hast found
"From all the storms of life a safe retreat,
"Sorrow thy breast henceforth no more shall wound
"Nor care invade thee in this quiet seat:
"The voice of the distressed no more shall meet
"The sympathising ear; another's woes
"Shall never interrupt the stillness sweet,
"Which here shall hush thee to serene repose,
"Nor damp the constant joys these scenes for thee disclose.

" Fatigue no more thy soft and lovely frame
" With vain benevolence and fruitless care;
" No deep heaved sigh shall here thy pity claim,
" Nor hateful want demand thy wealth to share;
" For thee shall Independence still prepare
" Pleasures unmingled, and for ever sure;
" His lips our sovereign's peaceful laws declare,
" Centre existence in thyself secure,
" Nor let an alien shade thy sunshine e'er obscure."

He spoke, and lo! unnumbered doors unfold,
And various scenes of revelry display;
Here Grandeur sunk beneath the massive gold;
Here discontented Beauty pined away,
And vainly conscious asked her promised sway;
Here Luxury prepared his sumptuous feast,
While lurking Apathy behind him lay
To poison all the insipid food he drest,
And shake his poppy crown o'er every sated guest.

The hireling minstrels strike their weary lyre,
And slumber o'er the oft repeated strain;
No listless youth to active grace they fire:
Here Eloquence herself might plead in vain,
Nor one of all the heartless crowd could gain:
And thou, oh! sweeter than the Muses song,
Affection's voice divine! with cold disdain
Even thou art heard, while mid the insulting throng
Thy daunted, shivering form moves timidly along!

Thus o'er the oiled surface softly slides
The unadmitted stream, rapid it flows,
And from the impervious plain pellucid glides;
Repulsed with gentle murmurs thus it goes,
Till in the porous earth it finds repose,
Concealed and sheltered in its parents breast:—
Oh! man's best treasure in this vale of woes!
Still cheer the sad, and comfort the distrest,
Nor ever be thy voice by selfishness opprest!

Psyche with languid step he leads around,
And bids her all the castle's splendour see.
Here Dissipation's constant sports abound,
While her loose hand in seeming bounty free,
Her scentless roses, painted mimicry,
Profusely sheds; here Pride unheeded tells
To nodding crowds his ancient pedigree;
And Folly with reiterated spells
To count her spotted cards the yawning group compels.

" See how, attentive to her subjects ease,"
To their reluctant prey exclaims her guide,
" Each fleeting joy of life she bids them seize,
" Anxious for each gay pastime to provide;
" See her fast spreading power increasing wide,
" Adored and worshipped in each splendid dome!
" Lo! Beauty glows for ever at her side,
" She bids her cheek the unvarying rose assume;
" And Bacchus sees for her his votive ivy bloom.

" Is aught then wanting in this fairy bower?
" Or is there aught which yet thy heart can move?"
That heart, unyielding to their sovereign's power,
In gentle whispers sighing answers, " Love!"
While scornful smiles the fond reply reprove,
" Lo!" he exclaims, " thy vanquished Cupid view;
" He oft with powerful arms had vainly strove
" Our sovereign's rocky fortress to subdue,
" Now, subject to her reign, he yields obedience due."

Wondering she gazed around, and where he points,
An idiot child in golden chains she spies,
Rich cumbrous gems load all his feeble joints,
A gaudy bandage seels his stupid eyes,
And foul Desire his short-lived torch supplies:
By the capricious hand of Fashion led,
Her sudden starts with tottering step he tries
Submissive to attend: him had she bred,
And Selfishness himself the nursling ever fed.

With lustre false his tinsel arms to deck
Ungraceful ornaments around him shone,
Gifts of his sportive guide; she round his neck
A glittering cord insultingly had thrown,
Loading its pendent purse with many a stone
And worthless dross, and ever as he went,
His leaden darts, with wanton aim unknown,
Now here, now there, in careless chance she sent,
That oft their blunted force in empty air was spent.

Shocked, from the gross imposture Psyche turned
With horror and disgust her fearful eye;
Her fate forlorn in silent anguish mourned,
And called her knight with many a hopeless sigh.
But see, the crowds in sudden tumult fly!
The doors, fast closing to exclude some foe,
Proclaim to Psyche's hopes her hero nigh:
Escaping from her guard she flies, when lo!
His form the bursting gates in awful beauty shew.

" Fly from these dangerous walls," his page exclaims;
" Swift let us haste our floating bark to gain!
" See thy knight's wondrous dart in terror flames;
" Soon shall these ice-built walls no shape retain!
" Nor can their Queen his dreaded sight sustain."
Scarcely she heard while rapidly she fled,
Even as a bird, escaped the wily train
The fowler with destructive art had spread,
Nor panting stays its flight, nor yet foregoes its dread.

See how astonished now the crowd supine,
Roused by his potent voice, confused arise;
In tottering masses o'er their heads decline
Dissolving walls; they gaze with wild surprise,
And each affrighted from the ruin flies:—
Pitying he views the vain unfeeling band
Beneath his care, a vile and worthless prize,
Their Queen alone his vengeful arms demand,
But unknown force was hers his terrors to withstand.

A shield she had of more than Gorgon power,
And whom she would she could transform to stone,
Nor ever had it failed her till that hour:
She proves his form invincible alone,
And calls its force petrific on her own.
Amazed he sees the indurated train,
The callous tenants of the silent throne,
And all the marble subjects of their reign,
Inviolably hard, their breathless shape retain.

The magic shield he thence in triumph bore,
Resolved, in pity to the human race,
Her noxious hands its might should guide no more,
And bade the seas conceal its Hydra face:
Oh! kindly meant, though much defeated grace!
For though the o'erwhelming weight of sounding waves
Conceal its rugged orb a little space,
Snatched by Glacella from the dark deep caves,
Once more the arm of Love with potent spell it braves.

But Psyche, rescued from their cruel scorn,
Urges her knight to hasten from the shore:
The buoyant vessel on the billows borne
Rides proudly o'er the mounting surge once more;
Again they spread the sails, the feathered oar
Skims with impatient stroke the sparkling tide;
The blushing Hymen now their smiles restore
Again to frolic gaily at their side,
Though still their playful taunts reproach their slumbering guide.

Psyche looks back with horror on the coast;
Black, drear, and desolate is all the scene:
The rocky cliffs still human shape may boast;
There the sad victims of the cruel Queen,
Memorials of her baneful power, are seen:
No vine crowned hills, no glowing vales appear,
Nor the white cottage laughs upon the green;
The black and leafless thorn alone is there,
And the chill mountains lift their summits wild and bare.

Her spirits lighten as they leave behind
The dreary prospect of Glacella's isle;
She blest with gladdened heart the light-winged wind
That bears her swiftly from a scene so vile;
With glistening eye, and hope's prophetic smile,
She hears her knight foretel their dangers o'er,
That sure success shall crown their fated toil,
And soon arriving at that happy shore,
Love shall again be found, and leave his bride no more.

Now, from light slumbers and delicious dreams,
The jocund cry of joy aroused the fair;
The morn that kissed her eyes with golden beams,
Bade her the universal transport share;
Divinely breathed the aromatic air,
And Psyche's heart, half fainting with delight,
In the peculiar odour wafted there
Recalled the breezes which, o'er scenes most bright,
Their wings of perfume shook, and lingering stayed
their flight.

The lovely shore the mariners descry,
And many a gladsome cheer the prospect hails;
Its graceful hills rise full before the eye,
While eagerly expanding all their sails
They woo the freshness of the morning gales:
The approaching scenes new opening charms display,
And Psyche's palpitating courage fails,
She sees arrived at length the important day,
Uncertain yet of power the mandate to obey.

But one dear object every wish confines,
Her spouse is promised in that bower of rest;
And shall the sun, that now so cheerful shines,
Indeed behold her to his bosom prest,
And in his heavenly smiles of fondness blest?
Oh! 'tis too much!—exhausted life she fears
Will struggling leave her agitated breast,
Ere to her longing eyes his form appears,
Or the soft hand of Love shall wipe away her tears.

Oh! how impatience gains upon the soul.
When the long promised hour of joy draws near!
How slow the tardy moments seem to roll!
What spectres rise of inconsistent fear!
To the fond doubting heart its hopes appear
Too brightly fair, too sweet to realize;
All seem but day-dreams of delight too dear!
Strange hopes and fears in painful contest rise,
While the scarce trusted bliss seems but to cheat the eyes.

But safely anchored in the happy port,
Led by her knight the golden sands she prest:
His heart beat high, his panting breath heaved short,
And sighs proclaim his agitated breast
By some important secret thought oppress:
" At length," he cries, " behold the fated spring!
" Yon rugged cliff conceals the fountain blest,
" (Dark rocks its crystal source o'ershadowing,)
" And Constance swift for thee the destined urn shall bring."

He speaks, but scarce she hears, her soul intent
Surveys as in a dream each well known scene:
Now from the pointed hills her eye she bent
Inquisitive o'er all the sloping green;
The graceful temple meet for Beauty's queen,
The orange groves that ever blooming glow,
The silvery flood, the ambrosial air serene,
The matchless trees that fragrant shade bestow,
All speak to Psyche's soul, all seem their queen to know.

Let the vain rover, who his youth hath past
Misled in idle search of happiness,
Declare, by late experience taught at last,
In all his toils he gained but weariness,
Wooed the coy goddess but to find that less
She ever grants where dearest she is bought;
She loves the sheltering bowers of home to bless,
Marks with her peaceful hand the favourite spot,
And smiles to see that Love has home his Psyche brought.

On the dear earth she kneels the turf to press,
With grateful lips and fondly streaming eyes,
" Are these the unknown bowers of Happiness?
" Oh! justly called, and gained at last!" she cries,
As eagerly to seize the urn she flies.
But lo! while yet she gazed with wondering eye
Constance ascends the steep to gain the prize,
The eagle's eyry is not built so high
As soon she sees his star bright blazing to the sky.

With light and nimble foot the boy descends,
And lifts the urn triumphant in his hand;
Low at the turf-raised altar Psyche bends,
While her fond eyes her promised Love demand;
Close at her side her faithful guardians stand,
As thus with timid voice she pays her vows,
" Venus, fulfilled is thine adored command,
" Thy voice divine the suppliant's claim allows,
" The smile of favour grant, restore her heavenly spouse."

Scarce on the altar had she placed the urn,
When lo! in whispers to her ravished ear
Speaks the soft voice of Love! "Turn, Psyche, turn!
"And see at last, released from every fear,
"Thy spouse, thy faithful knight, thy lover here!"
From his celestial brow the helmet fell,
In joy's full glow, unveiled his charms appear,
Beaming delight and love unspeakable,
While in one rapturous glance their mingling souls
they tell.

Two tapers thus, with pure converging rays,
In momentary flash their beams unite,
Shedding but one inseparable blaze
Of blended radiance and effulgence bright,
Self-lost in mutual intermingling light;
Thus, in her lover's circling arms embraced,
The fainting Psyche's soul, by sudden flight,
With his its subtlest essence interlaced;
Oh! bliss too vast for thought! by words how poorly traced!

Fond youth! whom Fate hath summoned to depart,
And quit the object of thy tenderest love,
How oft in absence shall thy pensive heart
Count the sad hours which must in exile move,
And still their irksome weariness reprove;
Distance with cruel weight but loads thy chain
With every step which bids thee farther rove,
While thy reverted eye, with fruitless pain,
Shall seek the trodden path its treasure to regain.

For thee what rapturous moments are prepared!
For thee shall dawn the long expected day!
And he who ne'er thy tender woes hath shared,
Hath never known the transport they shall pay,
To wash the memory of those woes away:
The bitter tears of absence thou must shed,
To know the bliss which tears of joy convey,
When the long hours of sad regret are fled,
And in one dear embrace thy pains compensated!

Even from afar beheld, how eagerly
With rapture thou shalt hail the loved abode!
Perhaps already, with impatient eye,
From the dear casement she hath marked thy road,
And many a sigh for thy return bestowed:
Even there she meets thy fond enamoured glance:
Thy soul with grateful tenderness o'erflowed,
Which firmly bore the hand of hard mischance,
Faints in the stronger power of joy's o'erwhelming trance.

With Psyche thou alone canst sympathise,
Thy heart benevolently shares her joy!
See her unclose her rapture beaming eyes,
And catch that softly pleasurable sigh,
That tells unutterable ecstasy!
While hark melodious numbers through the air,
On clouds of fragrance wafted from the sky,
Their ravished souls to pious awe prepare,
And lo! the herald doves the Queen of Love declare.

With fond embrace she clasped her long lost son,
And gracefully received his lovely bride,
" Psyche! thou hardly hast my favour won!"
With roseate smile her heavenly parent cried,
" Yet hence thy charms immortal, deified,
" With the young Joys, thy future offspring fair,
" Shall bloom for ever at thy lover's side;
" All ruling Jove's high mandate I declare,
" Blest denizen of Heaven! arise its joys to share."

She ceased, and lo! a thousand voices, joined
In sweetest chorus, Love's high triumph sing;
There, with the Graces and the Hours entwined,
His fairy train their rosy garlands bring,
Or round their mistress sport on halcyon wing;
While she enraptured lives in his dear eye,
And drinks immortal love from that pure spring
Of never-failing full felicity,
Bathed in ambrosial showers of bliss eternally!

Dreams of Delight farewel! your charms no more
Shall gild the hours of solitary gloom!
The page remains—but can the page restore
The vanished bowers which Fancy taught to bloom?
Ah, no! her smiles no longer can illume
The path my Psyche treads no more for me;
Consigned to dark oblivion's silent tomb
The visionary scenes no more I see,
Fast from the fading lines the vivid colours flee!

NOTES.

Page 108. *Thus on his bark the bold Biscayen stands,*

The whale fishery, on the coast of Greenland, was first carried on by the sailors of the Bay of Biscay.

See Goldsmith's Animated Nature, vol. vi.

Page 156. *The mystic honours next of Fauna—*

Fauna, called also the Bona Dea, during her life was celebrated for the exemplary purity of her manners, and after death was worshipped only by women.

Page 157. ———————*Bellerophon,*
And Peleus flying the Magnesian plain;

Ut Prætum mulier perfida credulum
Falsis impulerit criminibus, nimis
Casto Bellerophonti
Maturare necem, refert,
Narrat pene datum Pelea Tartaro,
Magnessam Hyppolyten dum fugit abstinens.
Hor. Ode vii. lib. iii.

Page 158. *Acastus' mourning daughter—*

Laodamia.

Page 158. *And thee, Dictynna!—*

A virgin of Crete, who threw herself from a rock into the sea, when pursued by Minos. The Cretans, not contented with giving her name to the rock which she had thus consecrated, were accustomed to worship Diana by the name of her unfortunate votary.

Page 161. *Still in that tuneful form—*

In a grove, sacred to Diana, was suspended a syrinx (the pipe into which the nymph Syringa had been metamorphosed) which was said to possess the miraculous power of thus justifying the calumniated.

Page 162. *The stream's rude ordeal—*

The trial of the Stygian fountain, by which the innocent were acquitted, and the guilty disgraced; the waters rising in a wonderful manner, so as to cover the laurel wreath of the unchaste female, who dared the examination.

Page 162. ————*the daring Clusia—*

Who, to avoid the violence of Torquatus, cast herself from a tower, and was preserved by the winds, which, swelling her garments, supported her as she gently descended to the earth.

Page 162. ——*those, whom Vesta in the trying hour*—

Claudia, a vestal, who having been accused of violating her vow, attested her innocence by drawing up the Tiber a ship, bearing a statue of the goddess, which many thousand men had not been able to remove.—Æmilia, who was suspected of unchastity from having inadvertently suffered the sacred flame to expire, by entrusting it to the care of a novice, but, imploring Vesta to justify her innocence, she tore her linen garment, and threw it upon the extinguished ashes of the cold altar; when, in the sight of priests and virgins, a sudden and pure fire was thus enkindled.—Tucia, who being falsely accused, carried water from the Tiber to the forum in a sieve, her accuser miraculously disappearing at the same time.

Page 162. ——*thou, whose purest hands*—

Sulpicia, a Roman lady of remarkable chastity; chosen by the Sibyls to dedicate a temple to Venus Verticordia, in order to obtain greater purity for her contemporary country-women.

Page 163. ———*Sinope's wiles!*

The nymph Sinope, being persecuted by the addresses of Jupiter, at length stipulated for his promise to grant her whatever she might ask, and having obtained this promise, claimed the gift of perpetual chastity.

———————————Sinope
Nympha prius, blandosque Jovis quæ luserat ignes
Cœlicolis inmota procis.—

Val. Flac. lib. v. ver. 110.

Sonnets.

WRITTEN IN A COPY OF PSYCHE

WHICH HAD BEEN IN THE LIBRARY OF C. J. FOX.

April, 1809.

DEAR consecrated page! methinks in thee
The patriot's eye hath left eternal light,
Beaming o'er every line with influence bright
A grace unknown before, nor due to me:
And still delighted fancy loves to see
The flattering smile which prompt indulgence might
(Even while he read what lowliest Muse could write)
Have hung upon that lip, whose melody
Truth, sense, and liberty had called their own.
For strength of mind and energy of thought,
With all the loveliest weakness of the heart,
An union beautiful in him had shewn;
And yet where'er the eye of taste found aught
To praise, he loved the critic's gentlest part.

WRITTEN AT SCARBOROUGH.

August, 1799.

As musing pensive in my silent home
I hear far off the sullen ocean's roar,
Where the rude wave just sweeps the level shore,
Or bursts upon the rocks with whitening foam,
I think upon the scenes my life has known;
On days of sorrow, and some hours of joy;
Both which alike time could so soon destroy!
And now they seem a busy dream alone;
While on the earth exists no single trace
Of all that shook my agitated soul,
As on the beach new waves for ever roll
And fill their past forgotten brother's place:
But I, like the worn sand, exposed remain
To each new storm which frets the angry main.

SONNET.

When glowing Phœbus quits the weeping earth,
What splendid visions rise upon the sight!
Fancy, with transient charms and colours bright,
To changing forms in Heaven's gay scene gives birth:
But soon the melting beauties disappear,
And fade like those which in life's early bloom
Hope bade me prize; and the approaching gloom,
These tints of sadness, and these shades of fear,
Resemble most that melancholy hour
Which, with a silent and resistless power,
Shrouded my joy's bright beam in shadowy night:
Till Memory marks each scene which once shone gay;
As the dark plains, beneath the Moon's soft light,
Again revealed, reflect a mellowing ray.

WRITTEN IN AUTUMN.

O Autumn! how I love thy pensive air,
  Thy yellow garb, thy visage sad and dun!
  When from the misty east the labouring Sun
Bursts through thy fogs, that gathering round him, dare
Obscure his beams, which, though enfeebled, dart
  On the cold, dewy plains a lustre bright:
  But chief, the sounds of thy reft woods delight;
Their deep, low murmurs to my soul impart
A solemn stillness, while they seem to speak
  Of Spring, of Summer now for ever past,
  Of drear, approaching Winter, and the blast
Which shall ere long their soothing quiet break:
  Here, when for faded joys my heaving breast
  Throbs with vain pangs, here will I love to rest.

SONNET.

Poor, fond deluded heart! wilt thou again
Listen, enchanted, to the syren song
Of treacherous Pleasure? Ah, deceived too long,
Cease now at length to throb with wishes vain!
Ah, cease her paths bewildering to explore!
Betrayed so oft! yet recollect the woe
Which waits on disappointment; taught to know
By sad experience, wilt thou not give o'er
To rest, deluded, on the fickle wing
Which Fancy lends thee in her airy flight,
But to seduce thee to some giddy height,
And leave thee there a poor forsaken thing.
Hope warbles once again, Truth pleads in vain,
And my charmed soul sinks vanquished by her strain.

WRITTEN IN THE CHURCH-YARD AT MALVERN.

This seems a spot to pensive sorrow dear,
Gloomy the shade which yields this ancient yew,
Sacred the seat of Death! soothed while I view
Thy hills, O Malvern, proudly rising near,
I bless the peaceful mound, the mouldering cross,
And every stone whose rudely sculptured form
Hath braved the rage of many a winter's storm.
Pleased with the melancholy scene, each loss
Once more I weep; and wish this grave were thine.
Poor, lost, lamented friend! that o'er thy clay
For once this last, sad tribute I might pay,
And, with my tears, to the cold tomb resign
Each hope of bliss, each vanity of life,
And all the passions agonizing strife.

SONNET.

For me would Fancy now her chaplet twine
Of Hope's bright blossoms, and Joy's fairy flowers,
As she was wont to do in gayer hours;
Ill would it suit this brow, where many a line
Declares the spring-time of my life gone by,
And summer far advanced; what now remain
Of waning years, should own staid Wisdom's reign
Shall my distempered heart still idly sigh
For those gay phantoms, chased by sober truth?
Those forms tumultuous which sick visions bring,
That lightly flitting on the transient wing
Disturbed the fevered slumbers of my youth?
Ah, no! my suffering soul at length restored,
Shall taste the calm repose so oft in vain implored

SONNET.

As one who late hath lost a friend adored,
Clings with sick pleasure to the faintest trace
Resemblance offers in another's face,
Or sadly gazing on that form deplored,
Would clasp the silent canvas to his breast:
So muse I on the good I have enjoyed,
The wretched victim of my hopes destroyed;
On images of peace I fondly rest,
Or in the page, where weeping fancy mourns,
I love to dwell upon each tender line,
And think the bliss once tasted still is mine;
While cheated memory to the past returns,
And, from the present leads my shivering heart
Back to those scenes from which it wept to part.

TO TIME.

Yes, gentle Time, thy gradual, healing hand
Hath stolen from sorrow's grasp the envenomed dart;
Submitting to thy skill, my passive heart
Feels that no grief can thy soft power withstand;
And though my aching breast still heaves the sigh,
Though oft the tear swells silent in mine eye;
Yet the keen pang, the agony is gone;
Sorrow and I shall part; and these faint throes
Are but the remnant of severer woes:
As when the furious tempest is o'erblown,
And when the sky has wept its violence,
The opening heavens will oft let fall a shower,
The poor o'ercharged boughs still drops dispense,
And still the loaded streams in torrents pour.

SONNET.

Ye dear associates of my gayer hours,
Ah! whither are you gone? on what light wing
Is Fancy fled? Mute is the dulcet string
Of long-lost Hope? No more her magic powers
Scatter o'er my lorn path fallacious flowers,
As she was wont with glowing hand to fling
Loading with fragrance the soft gales of Spring,
While fondly pointing to fresh blooming bowers,
Now faded, with each dazzling view of bright,
Delusive pleasure; never more return,
Ye vain, ideal visions of delight!
For in your absence I have learned to mourn;
Ye bear the torch of Truth with steady sight,
And weave the cypress for my future urn.

SONNET.

As nearer I approach that fatal day
  Which makes all mortal cares appear so light,
  Time seems on swifter wing to speed his flight,
And Hope's fallacious visions fade away;
While to my fond desires, at length, I say,
  Behold, how quickly melted from your sight
  The promised objects you esteemed so bright,
When love was all your song, and life looked gay!
Now let us rest in peace! those hours are past,
  And with them, all the agitating train
  By which hope led the wandering cheated soul;
Wearied, she seeks repose, and owns at last
  How sighs, and tears, and youth, were spent in vain,
  While languishing she mourned in folly's sad control.

WRITTEN AT ROSSANA.

November 18, 1799.

Oh, my rash hand! what hast thou idly done?
Torn from its humble bank the last poor flower
That patient lingered to this wintery hour:
Expanding cheerly to the languid sun
It flourished yet, and yet it might have blown,
Had not thy sudden desolating power
Destroyed what many a storm and angry shower
Had pitying spared. The pride of summer gone,
Cherish what yet in faded life can bloom;
And if domestic love still sweetly smiles,
If sheltered by thy cot he yet beguiles
Thy winter's prospect of its dreary gloom,
Oh, from the spoiler's touch thy treasure screen,
To bask beneath Contentment's beam serene!

WRITTEN AT ROSSANA.

Dear chesnut bower, I hail thy secret shade,
Image of tranquil life! escaped yon throng,
Who weave the dance, and swell the choral song;
And all the summer's day have wanton played:
I bless thy kindly gloom in silence laid:
What though no prospects gay to thee belong;
Yet here I heed nor showers, nor sunbeams strong,
Which they, whose perfumed tresses roses braid,
Dispersing fear. Their sunny bank more bright,
And on their circled green more sweets abound,
Yet the rude blasts, which rend their vestments light,
O'er these dark boughs with harmless music sound,
And though no lively pleasures here are found,
Yet shall no sudden storms my calm retreat affright.

WRITTEN AT THE EAGLE'S NEST,

KILLARNEY.

July 26, 1800.

HERE let us rest, while with meridan blaze
The sun rides glorious 'mid the cloudless sky,
While o'er the lake no cooling Zephyrs fly,
But on the liquid glass we dazzled gaze,
And fainting ask for shade: lo! where his nest
The bird of Jove has fixed: the lofty brow,
With arbutus and fragrant wild shrubs drest,
Impendent frowns, nor will approach allow:
Here the soft turf invites; here magic sounds
Celestially respondent shall enchant,
While Melody from yon steep wood rebounds
In thrilling cadence sweet. Sure, life can grant
No brighter hours than this; and memory oft
Shall paint this happiest scene with pencil soft.

WRITTEN AT KILLARNEY.

July, 29 1800.

How soft the pause! the notes melodious cease,
  Which from each feeling could an echo call;
  Rest on your oars; that not a sound may fall
To interrupt the stillness of our peace:
The fanning west-wind breathes upon our cheeks
  Yet glowing with the sun's departed beams.
  Through the blue heavens the cloudless moon pours streams
Of pure resplendent light, in silver streaks
Reflected on the still, unruffled lake.
  The Alpine hills in solemn silence frown,
  While the dark woods night's deepest shades embrown.
And now once more that soothing strain awake!
Oh, ever to my heart, with magic power,
Shall those sweet sounds recal this rapturous hour!

ON LEAVING KILLARNEY.

August 5, 1800.

FAREWEL, sweet scenes! pensive once more I turn
Those pointed hills, and wood-fringed lakes to view
With fond regret; while in this last adieu
A silent tear those brilliant hours shall mourn
For ever past. So from the pleasant shore,
Borne with the struggling bark against the wind,
The trembling pennant fluttering looks behind
With vain reluctance! 'Mid those woods no more
For me the voice of pleasure shall resound,
Nor soft flutes warbling o'er the placid lake
Aërial music shall for me awake,
And wrap my charmed soul in peace profound!
Though lost to me, here still may Taste delight
To dwell, nor the rude axe the trembling Dryads fright!

TO DEATH.

O THOU most terrible, most dreaded power,
In whatsoever form thou meetest the eye!
Whether thou biddest thy sudden arrow fly
In the dread silence of the midnight hour;
Or whether, hovering o'er the lingering wretch
Thy sad cold javelin hangs suspended long,
While round the couch the weeping kindred throng
With hope and fear alternately on stretch;
Oh, say, for me what horrors are prepared?
Am I now doomed to meet thy fatal arm?
Or wilt thou first from life steal every charm,
And bear away each good my soul would guard?
That thus, deprived of all it loved, my heart
From life itself contentedly may part.

TO W. P. Esq. Avondale.

We wish for thee, dear friend! for summer eve
Upon thy loveliest landscape never cast
Looks of more lingering sweetness than the last.
The slanting sun, reluctant to bereave
Thy woods of beauty, fondly seemed to leave
Smiles of the softest light, that slowly past
In bright succession o'er each charm thou hast
Thyself so oft admired. And we might grieve
Thine eye of taste should ever wander hence
O'er scenes less lovely than thine own; but here
Thou wilt return, and feel thy home more dear;
More dear the Muses' gentler influence,
When on the busy world, with wisdom's smile,
And heart uninjured, thou hast gazed awhile.

ADDRESSED TO MY BROTHER.

1805.

BROTHER beloved! if health shall smile again
Upon this wasted form and fevered cheek;
If e'er returning vigour bids these weak
And languid limbs their gladsome strength regain;
Well may thy brow the placid glow retain
Of sweet content, and thy pleased eye may speak
Thy conscious self-applause: but should I seek
To utter what this heart can feel, ah! vain
Were the attempt! Yet, kindest friends, as o'er
My couch ye bend, and watch with tenderness
The being whom your cares could e'en restore
From the cold grasp of death; say, can you guess
The feelings which this lip can ne'er express?
Feelings deep fixed in grateful memory's store!

ADDRESS TO MY HARP.

Oh, my loved Harp! companion dear!
Sweet soother of my secret grief,
No more thy sounds my soul must cheer,
No more afford a soft relief.

When anxious cares my heart oppressed,
When doubts distracting tore my soul,
The pains which heaved my swelling breast
Thy gentle sway could oft control.

Each well remembered, practised strain,
The cheerful dance, the tender song,
Recalled with pensive, pleasing pain
Some image loved and cherished long.

Where joy sat smiling o'er my fate,
And marked each bright and happy day,
When partial friends around me sat,
And taught my lips the simple lay;

And when by disappointment grieved
I saw some darling hope o'erthrown,
Thou hast my secret pain relieved;
O'er thee I wept, unseen, alone.

Oh! must I leave thee, must we part,
Dear partner of my happiest days?
I may forget thy much-loved art,
Unused thy melody to raise,

But ne'er can memory cease to love
Those scenes where I thy charms have felt,
Though I no more thy power may prove,
Which taught my softened heart to melt.

Forced to forego with thee this spot,
  Endeared by many a tender tie,
When rosy pleasure blessed my lot,
  And sparkled in my cheated eye.

Yet still thy strings, in Fancy's ear,
  With soothing melody shall play;
Thy silver sounds I oft shall hear,
  To pensive gloom a silent prey.

MORNING.

———*toties nostros Titania questus*
Præterit, et gelido spargit miscrata flagello. STATIUS.

O MORN! I hail thy soft, enchanting breezes,
Thy soul-felt presence, and reviving light;
Thy glad approach my anxious bosom eases,
And care and sorrow for a while take flight.

Like youth's gay hours, or Spring's delicious season,
To me once more thy balmy breath appears;
Lost hope returns, assumes the face of reason,
And half persuades to flight oppressive fears.

While darkened casements vainly light excluded,
I wooed propitious sleep with languid sighs,
Care through the gloom his anxious face obtruded,
And banished slumber from my weary eyes.

The tedious hours I told with watchful anguish,
And oft, O Morn! accused thy long delay:
I hail thee now, no longer vainly languish,
But quit my couch, and bless refreshing day.

Through the long night impatient, sad, and weary,
How melancholy life itself appeared!
Lo! cheerful day illumes my prospects dreary,
And how diminished are the ills I feared!

Though pleasure shine not in the expected morrow,
Though nought were promised but return of care,
The light of Heaven could banish half my sorrow,
And comfort whispers in the fresh, cool air.

I hear the grateful voice of joy and pleasure,
All nature seems my sadness to reprove,
High trills the lark his wild ecstatic measure,
The groves resound with liberty and love:

Ere his glad voice proclaimed thy dawning early,
How oft deceived I rose thy light to hail;
Through the damp grass hoarse accents sounded cheerly,
As wooed his distant love the wakeful rail.

Oh, you! who murmur at the call of duty,
And quit your pillow with reluctant sloth,
For whom the Morn in vain displays her beauty,
While tasteless you can greet her smiles so loth;

You cannot know the charm which o'er me stealing,
Revives my senses as I taste her breath,
Which half repays the agony of feeling
A night of horrors, only less than death.

THE VARTREE.

Quivi le piante più che altrove ombrose
E l'erba molle, e il fresco dolce appare. POLIZIANO.

SWEET are thy banks, O Vartree! when at morn
Their velvet verdure glistens with the dew;
When fragrant gales by softest Zephyrs borne
Unfold the flowers, and ope their petals new.

How bright the lustre of thy silver tide,
Which winds, reluctant to forsake the vale!
How play the quivering branches on thy side,
And lucid catch the sun-beam in the gale!

And sweet thy shade at Noon's more fervid hours,
When faint we quit the upland gayer lawn
To seek the freshness of thy sheltering bowers,
Thy chesnut glooms, where day can scarcely dawn.

How soothing in the dark sequestered grove
To see thy placid waters seem to sleep;
Pleased they reflect the *sombre* tints they love,
As unperceived in silent peace they creep.

The deepest foliage bending o'er thy wave
Tastes thy pure kisses with embracing arms,
While each charmed Dryad stoops her limbs to lave
Thy smiling Naïad meets her sister charms.

Beneath the fragrant lime, or spreading beech,
The bleating flocks in panting crowds repose:
Their voice alone my dark retreat can reach,
While peace and silence all my soul compose.

Here, Mary, rest! the dangerous path forsake
Where folly lures thee, and where vice ensnares,
Thine innocence and peace no longer stake,
Nor barter solid good for brilliant cares.

Shun the vain bustle of the senseless crowd,
Where all is hollow that appears like joy;
Where, the soft claims of feeling disallowed,
Fallacious hopes the baffled soul annoy.

Hast thou not trod each vain and giddy maze,
By Flattery led o'er Pleasure's gayest field?
Basked in the sunshine of her brightest blaze,
And proved whate'er she can her votaries yield?

That full completion of each glowing hope,
Which youth and novelty could scarce bestow,
From the last dregs of Joy's exhausted cup
Canst thou expect thy years mature shall know?

Hast thou not tried the vanities of life,
And all the poor, mean joys of Fashion known?
Blush then to hold with Wisdom longer strife,
Submit at length a better guide to own.

Here woo the Muses in the scenes they love;
Let Science near thee take her patient stand:
Each weak regret for gayer hours reprove,
And yield thy soul to Reason's calm command.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND IS THE MEDICINE OF LIFE.

SON OF SIRACH.

IN the dreams of delight, which with ardour we seek,
Oft the phantom of sorrow appears;
And the roses of pleasure, which bloom in your cheek,
Must be steeped in the dew of your tears:

'Mid the fountain of bliss, when it sparkles most bright,
Salt mixtures embitter the spring,
Though its lustre may tremble through bowers of delight,
In the draught disappointment will sting.

But if Heaven hath one cup of enjoyment bestowed,
Unmingled and sweet as its own,
In the streams of affection its bounty hath flowed,
And there we may taste it alone.

But the pure simple drops Love would seize as his prize
And defile them with passion's foul tide;
While the bowl he prepares as it dazzles our eyes
The poison of anguish can hide.

Let Friendship the stream, as it flows calm and clear,
Receive unpolluted for me;
Or if tenderness mingle a sigh or a tear,
The draught still the sweeter will be.

But let me reject the too-high flavoured bowl
Affectation or Flattery compose,
From Sincerity's urn thus transparent shall roll
The cordial of peace and repose.

Oh! give me the friend, from whose warm, faithful breast
The sigh breathes responsive to mine,
Where my cares may obtain the soft pillow of rest,
And my sorrows may love to recline.

Not the friend who my hours of pleasure will share,
But abide not the season of grief;
Who flies from the brow that is darkened by care,
And the silence that looks for relief.

Not the friend who, suspicious of change or of guile,
Would shrink from a confidence free;
Nor him who with fondness complacent can smile
On the eye that looks coldly on me.

As the mirror that, just to each blemish or grace,
To myself will my image reflect,
But to none but myself will that image retrace,
Nor picture one absent defect.

To my soul let my friend be a mirror as true,
Thus my faults from all others conceal;
Nor, absent, those failings or follies renew,
Which from Heaven and from man he should veil.

VERSES WRITTEN AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF SPRING.—1802.

Oh, breathe once more upon my brow,
Soft gale of Spring, forgotten never!
For thus thy breath appeared as now
In days of joy, ah! lost for ever.

Put forth thy fresh and tender leaves,
Soft Eglantine, of fragrance early,
Thee Memory first revived perceives,
From childhood's dawn still welcomed yearly.

Burst from thy leafy sheath once more,
Bright Hyacinth! thy splendour showing,
The sun thy hues shall now restore
In all their foreign lustre glowing.

Oh, plume again thy jetty wing,
Sweet Blackbird, charm thy listening lover!
For thus, even thus, I heard thee sing,
When hopes could smile that now are over.

And thou, dear Red-breast, let me hear,
Exchanged once more thy wintery measure,
Thy notes proclaim the spring-tide near,
As they were wont in hours of pleasure.

The Lark shall mount the sapphire skies
And wake the grateful song of gladness;
One general peal from earth shall rise,
And man alone shall droop in sadness.

'Twas here by peace and friendship blest,
I paid to Spring my yearly duty,
When last she decked her fragrant breast
In all the glowing pride of beauty.

'Twas here the cordial look of love
From every eye benignly flowing,
Bade the kind hours in union move,
Each lip the ready smile bestowing.

But where the blooming Cherub Boy,
Who hailed with us the pleasant season,
Whose smiles recalled each childish joy,
That sadder years resigned to Reason?

Those bright, those laughing eyes, where Love
And Innocence are seen embracing;
Those fairy hands, that graceful move
Their fancy-formed circles tracing.

Oh, haste as thou wast wont to do;
We'll mount yon shrubby steep together:
Thy care the first wood flowers shall shew,
Thyself all blooming as the weather.

Haste, sweetest Babe, beloved of all!
Our cheerful hours without thee languish:
Ah! hush! . . . . he hears no more thy call!
Ah! hush! . . . . nor wake a parent's anguish!

That lip of roses glows no more;
That beaming glance in night is clouded;
Those bland endearments all are o'er,
In death's dark pall for ever shrouded.

No, Angel sweetness! not for ever,
Though Heaven from us thy charms hath hidden,
We joy for thee, though forced to sever;
O favoured guest, thus early bidden!

Even o'er thy dying couch, sweet Boy!
A heavenly Messenger presided;
He beckoned thee to seats of joy,
To fields of endless rapture guided.

No, not for thee this bitter tear,
It falls for those yet doomed to sorrow;
Who feel the load of life severe,
Who mourn the past, nor hope the morrow.

It falls for those who, left behind,
Must fill their woes allotted measure;
Who muse in hopes to death consigned
On visions of departed pleasure.

For those who through life's dreary night
Full many a watchful hour shall number,
And sigh for long delaying light,
Or envy those who early slumber.

TO THE MEMORY OF MARGARET TIGHE:

TAKEN FROM US JUNE 7TH, 1804.—ÆTAT 85.

SWEET, placid Spirit! blest, supremely blest,
Whose life was tranquil, and whose end was rest;
'Tis not for thee our general tears shall flow,
Our loss is selfish, selfish is our woe:
We mourn a common parent, common friend,
Centre, round whom thy children loved to bend:
Where hands divided, met again to move
In one sweet circle of united love:
We mourn the tender, sympathising heart
So prompt to aid, and share the sufferer's part;
The liberal hand, the kindly patient ear,
Pity's soft sigh, and ever ready tear;
The graceful form, yet lovely in decay,
The peace inspiring eye's benignant ray;

The lip of tenderness that soothed the sad,
And loved to bid the innocent be glad;
The gently, softening, reconciling word,
The ever cheerful, hospitable board:
The unassuming wisdom, pious prayers,
The still renewed, prolonged, maternal cares:
All—all are lost!—of thee, blest Saint, bereft,
We mourn, to whom impoverished life is left:
Mourn for ourselves! Secure thy lot must be,
With those who pure in heart their God shall see.

VERSES WRITTEN IN SICKNESS.

December, 1804.

O THOU, whom Folly's votaries slight,
Domestic Love! assuasive power!
Life's ruby gem, which sheds its light
Through age and sorrow's darkest hour,

Sweeter than Pleasure's syren lay,
Brighter than Passion's fevered dream!
Still round my pillow soothing stay,
Still spread thy kindly lambent beam.

Alas! for him whose youth has bowed
Beneath the oppressive hand of pain;
Whose claim to pity disallowed
Bids him the unheeded groan restrain.

Alas! for him who droops like me,
Who mourns life's faded vigour flown,
But finds no soothing sympathy,
No tender cares his loss atone.

For him no wakeful eye of love
Resists the slumbers health would shed,
With kind assistance prompt to move,
And gently prop the aching head:

With delicate attention paid
In hope to minister relief,
He sees no sacrifices made;
He sees no Mother's anxious grief!

But I, poor sufferer, doomed in vain
To woo the health which Heaven denied,
Though nights of horror, days of pain
The baffled opiate's force deride,

Yet well I know, and grateful feel,
How much can lenient kindness do,
From anguish half its darts to steal,
And faded hope's sick smile renew.

Oh! how consoling is the eye
Of the dear friend that shares our woes!
Oh! what relief those cares supply,
Which watchful, active love bestows!

And these are mine!—Shall I then dare
To murmur at so mild a lot?
Nor dwell on comforts still my share
With thankful and contented thought?

Though destined to the couch of pain,
Though torn from pleasures once too dear,
Around that couch shall still remain
The love that every pain can cheer.

And o'er that couch, in fondness bent,
My languid glance shall grateful meet
The eye of love benevolent,
The tender smile, the tear most sweet.

And still for me affection's hand
Shall o'er that couch her roses shed
And woo from ease her poppied band,
To twine around this throbbing head.

O pitying Heaven! these comforts spare,
Though age untimely chill gay hope;
May Love still crown the sufferer's prayer,
And gently smooth life's downward slope!

PLEASURE.

Ah, syren Pleasure! when thy flattering strains
Lured me to seek thee through thy flowery plains,
Taught from thy sparkling cup full joys to sip,
And suck sweet poison from thy velvet lip,
Didst thou in opiate charms my virtue steep,
Was Reason silent, and did Conscience sleep?
How could I else enjoy thy faithless dreams,
And fancy day-light in thy meteor gleams;
Think all was happiness, that smiled like joy,
And with dear purchase seize each glittering toy?
Till roused at length, deep rankling in my heart,
I felt the latent anguish of thy dart!
Oh, let the young and innocent beware,
Nor think uninjured to approach thy snare!

Their surest conquest is, the foe to shun;
By fight infected, and by truce undone.
Secure, at distance let her shores be past,
Whose sight can poison, and whose breath can blast.
Contentment blooms not on her glowing ground,
And round her splendid shrine no peace is found.
If once enchanted by her magic charms,
They seek for bliss in Dissipation's arms:
If once they touch the limits of her realm,
Offended Principle resigns the helm,
Simplicity forsakes the treacherous shore,
And once discarded, she returns no more.
Thus the charmed mariner on every side
Of poisoned Senegal's ill-omened tide,
Eyes the rich carpet of the varied hue
And plains luxuriant opening to his view:
Now the steep banks with towering forests crowned,
Clothed to the margin of the sloping ground;
Where with full foliage bending o'er the waves,
Its verdant arms the spreading Mangrove laves;

And now smooth, level lawns of deeper green
Betray the richness of the untrodden scene:
Between the opening groves such prospects glow,
As Art with mimic hand can ne'er bestow,
While lavish Nature wild profusion yields,
And spreads, unbid, the rank uncultured fields;
Flings with fantastic hand in every gale
Ten thousand blossoms o'er each velvet vale,
And bids unclassed their fragrant beauties die
Far from the painter's hand or sage's eye.
From cloudless suns perpetual lustre streams,
And swarms of insects glisten in their beams.
Near and more near the heedless sailors steer,
Spread all their canvas, and no warnings hear.
See, on the edge of the clear liquid glass
The wondering beasts survey them as they pass,
And fearless bounding o'er their native green,
Adorn the landscape, and enrich the scene;
Ah, fatal scene! the deadly vapours rise,
And swift the vegetable poison flies,

Putrescence loads the rank infected ground,
Deceitful calms deal subtle death around;
Even as they gaze their vital powers decay,
Their wasted health and vigour melt away;
Till quite extinct the animating fire,
Pale, ghastly victims, they at last expire.

WRITTEN FOR HER NIECE S. K.

Sweetest! if thy fairy hand
Culls for me the latest flowers,
Smiling hear me thus demand
Blessings for thy early hours;

Be thy promised spring as bright
As its opening charms foretel;
Graced with Beauty's lovely light,
Modest Virtue's dearer spell.

Be thy summer's matron bloom
Blest with blossoms sweet like thee;
May no tempest's sudden doom
Blast thy hope's fair nursery!

May thine autumn calm, serene,
Never want some lingering flower,
Which affection's hand may glean,
Though the darkling mists may lower!

Sunshine cheer thy wintry day,
Tranquil conscience, peace, and love;
And thy wintry nights display
Streams of glorious light above.

TO FORTUNE.

FROM METASTASIO.

UNSTABLE Goddess! why, with care severe,
Still dost thou strew with thorns my rugged path?
Thinkst thou I tremble at thy frowns? or e'er
Will crouch submissive to avert thy wrath?
Preserve thy threats for thine unhappy slaves,
The shuddering victims of thy treacherous power;
My soul, thou knowest, amid o'erwhelming waves,
Shall smile superior in the roughest hour.
With me as oft as thou wouldest proudly wage
The combat urged by thy malicious ire,
Full well thou knowest, that from thy baffled rage
My soul has seemed fresh vigour to acquire;
So the bright steel beneath the hammer's blows
More polished, more refined, and keener grows.

THE PICTURE.

WRITTEN FOR ANGELA.

Yes, these are the features already imprest
So deep by the pencil of Love on my heart!
Within their reflection they find in this breast:
Yet something is wanting: ah! where is the art
That to painting so true can that something impart?

Oh! where is the sweetness that dwells on that lip?
And where is the smile that enchanted my soul?
No sweet dew of love from these roses I sip,
Nor meet the soft glance which with magic control
O'er the cords of my heart so bewitchingly stole.

Cold, cold is that eye! unimpassioned its beams;
They speak not of tenderness, love, or delight:
Oh! where is the heart-thrilling rapture that streams
From the heavenly blue of that circle so bright,
That sunshine of pleasure which gladdened my sight?

Yet come to my bosom, O image adored!
And, sure, thou shalt feel the soft flame of my heart,
The glow sympathetic once more be restored,
Once more it shall warm thee, ah, cold as thou art!
And to charms so beloved its own feelings impart!

Oh, come! and while others his form may behold,
And he on another with fondness may smile,
To thee shall my wrongs, shall my sorrows be told,
And the kiss I may give thee, these sorrows the while,
Like the memory of joys which are past, shall beguile.

THE SHAWL'S PETITION,

TO LADY ASGILL.

Oh, fairer than the fairest forms
Which the bright sun of Persia warms,
Though nymphs of Cashmire lead the dance
With pliant grace, and beamy glance;
And forms of beauty ever play
Around the bowers of Moselay;
Fairest! thine ear indulgent lend,
And to thy suppliant Shawl attend!
If, well content, I left for thee
Those bowers beyond the Indian sea,
And native, fragrant fields of rose
Exchanged for Hyperborean snows;
If, from those vales of soft perfume,
Pride of Tibet's far boasted loom,

I came, well pleased, thy form to deck,
And, from thy bending polished neck
Around thy graceful shoulders flung,
With many an untaught beauty clung,
Or added to thy brilliant zone
A charm that Venus well might own,
Or, fondly twined, in many a fold
To shield those lovely limbs from cold,
Fairest! thine ear indulgent lend,
And to thy suppliant Shawl attend.
Oh! by those all attractive charms
Thy slender foot, thine ivory arms;
By the quick glances of thine eyes,
By all that I have seen thee prize;
Oh! doom me not in dark disgrace,
An exile from Sophia's face,
To waste my elegance of bloom
In sick and melancholy gloom;
Condemned no more in Beauty's train
To hear the viol's sprightly strain,

Or woo the amorous zephyr's play
Beneath the sunbeam's vernal ray;
Banished alike from pleasure's scene,
And lovely nature's charms serene,
Oh, fairest! doom me not to know
How hard it is from thee to go!
  But if my humble suit be vain,
If destined to attend on pain,
My joyless days in one dull round,
To one eternal sopha bound,
Shut from the breath of heaven most pure,
Must pass in solitude obscure;
At least to cheat these weary hours
Appear with all thy gladdening powers,
Restore thy sweet society,
And bless at once thy friend and me.

TO LADY CHARLEMONT,

IN RETURN FOR HER PRESENTS OF FLOWERS.

March, 1808.

YES, though the sullen east-wind storm,
And sunless skies the Spring deform,
The lovely Nina's graceful hand
Can, like a fairy's lily wand,
Bid every vernal sweet appear,
And bloom with early fragrance here!
Yes here, even here, they breathe perfume,
Though walls of melancholy gloom,
With northern aspect frowning rude,
Each brighter beam of Heaven exclude.
Behold! at Nina's soft command,
The flowers their velvet leaves expand,

And sweet, and blue like her own eye,
(That loves in languid peace to lie,
And bending beautiful in shade,
Seems of the amorous light afraid)
Fresh violets here their charms diffuse,
And here, with richly mingling hues,
The gold and purple crocus vie
To mock the pomp of majesty.
See how her soul-bewitching smile
Can even selfish love beguile!
While fair Narcissus bends no more
His snowy beauties to adore,
But lifts for once his cups of gold
A fairer image to behold.
Dear Nina! teach a grateful heart
Thine own persuasive, winning art;
So might I best my thanks commend,
So please each kind, each cherished friend!
For, as thy hand with smiling flowers
Hath crowned the lingering, wintry hours,

Even thus for me affection's care
Hath sheltered from the nipping air
The tender buds of half-chilled hope
That seemed in withering gloom to droop,
And bid them bloom, revived again,
In spite of years, and grief, and pain.
O'er me Affection loves to shed
Her comforts full, unmeasured;
To bless my smiling hearth she sends
The dearer smile of dearest friends,
And bids my prison couch assume
No form of pain, no air of gloom;
But sweet content and cheerful ease,
All that in solitude can please,
And all that soothing, social love
Can bid its quiet favourites prove,
Wooed by the voice of tenderness,
Unite my happy home to bless.
As round that lovely pictured wreath
Where Rubens bid his pencil breathe,

Where touched with all its magic power
Glow the rich colours of each flower,
Attendant cherubs sweetly join,
And all their odorous wings entwine;
One cherub guards each blushing flower,
And pure ambrosia seems to shower:
So, Nina, o'er each peaceful day
Protecting love and kindness play,
And shed o'er each some balmy pleasure
That grateful memory loves to treasure!

WRITTEN AT WEST-ASTON.

June, 1808.

Yes, I remember the dear suffering saint,
Whose hand, with fond, commemorative care,
Planted that myrtle on my natal day.
It was a day of joy to him she loved
Best upon earth;—and still her gentle heart,
That never felt one passion's eager throb,
Nor aught but quiet joys, and patient woes,
Was prompt to sympathize with all; and most
With that beloved brother.—She had hoped
Perchance, that, fondly on his arm reclined
In placid happiness, her feeble step
Might here have wandered through these friendly shades,
This hospitable seat of kindred worth:
And that the plant, thus reared, in future years
Might win his smile benignant, when her hand

Should point where, in its bower of loveliness,
Bright spreading to the sun its fragrant leaf,
His Mary's myrtle bloomed.—Ah me! 'tis sad
When sweet affection thus designs in vain,
And sees the fragile web it smiling spun
In playful love, crushed by the sudden storm,
And swept to dark oblivion, mid the wreck
Of greater hopes!—Even while she thought of bliss,
Already o'er that darling brother's head
The death-commissioned angel noiseless waved
His black and heavy wings: and though she mourned
That stroke, in pious sorrow, many a year,
Yet, even then, the life-consuming shaft
In her chaste breast she uncomplaining bore.
Now, both at rest, in blessed peacefulness,
With no impatient hope, regret, or doubt,
Await that full completion of the bliss
Which their more perfect spirits shall receive.
Fair blossomed her young tree, effusing sweet
Its aromatic breath; for other eyes
Blushed the soft folded buds, and other hands

Pruned its luxuriant branches: friendship still
Preserved the fond memorial; nay, even yet
Would fain preserve with careful tenderness
The blighted relic of what once it loved.
Hard were the wintry hours felt even here
Amid these green protecting walls, and late
The timid Spring, oft chilled and rudely checked,
At last unveiled her tenderest charms, and smiled
With radiant blushes on her amorous train:
But no reviving gale, no fruitful dew,
Visits the brown parched leaf, or from the stem,
The withering stem, elicits the young shoots
With hopes of life and beauty; yet thy care
Perhaps, dear Sydney, thine assiduous care
May save it still. What can resist the care
Of fond, assiduous love? Oh! it can raise
The shuddering soul, though sunk beneath the black,
Suspended pall of death! Believe this lip,
Believe this grateful heart, which best can feel
The life-restoring power of watchful love.

BRYAN BYRNE,

OF GLENMALURE.

Bright shines the morn o'er Carickmure,
And silvers every mountain stream;
The autumnal woods on Glenmalure
Look lovely in the slanting beam.

And hark! the cry, the cry of joy,
The hounds spring o'er yon heathy brow!—
"'Tis but the hunter's horn, my boy,
No death-tongued bugle scares us now."

In vain the widowed mother smiled,
And clasped her darling to her breast;
Horror and rage o'er all the child
A manly beauty strange impressed.

Fierce rolled his eye, of heaven's own hue,
And the quick blood strong passions told,
As fresh the breeze of morning blew
From his clear brow the locks of gold.

'Tis not alone the horn so shrill;——
Yon martial plume that waves on high,
Bids every infant nerve to thrill
With more than infant agony.

Yet gentle was the soldier's heart,
Whom 'mid the gallant troop he spied
Who let the gallant troop depart,
And checked his eager courser's pride.

"What fears the child?" he wondering cried,
With courteous air as near he drew.
"Soldier, away! my father died,
Murdered by men of blood like you."

Even while the angry cherub speaks,
He struggles from the stranger's grasp:
Kissing the tears that bathed her cheeks,
His little arms his mother clasp.

"And who are these,—this startled pair,
Who swift down Glenmalure are fled?
Behold the mother's maniac air,
As seized with wild and sudden dread!"

"'Tis Ellen Byrne," an old man cried;
"Poor Ellen, and her orphan boy!"
Then turned his silvered brow aside,
To shun the youth's enquiring eye.

"And is there none to guard the child,
Save that lone frenzied widow's hand?
These rocky heights, these steep woods wild,
Sure some more watchful eye demand."

" Ah, well he knows each rock, each wood,
The mountain goat not more secure;
And he was born to hardships rude,
The orphan Byrne of Carickmure.

" That boy had seen his father's blood,
Had heard his murdered father's groan;
And never more in playful mood
With smiles his infant beauty shone."

Sad was the pitying stranger's eye:
" Too well," said he, " I guess the truth;
His father, sure, was doomed to die,
Some poor deluded rebel youth."

" No rebel he," with eye inflamed,
And cheek that glowed with transient fire,
Roused to a sudden warmth, exclaimed
The hapless Ellen's aged sire.

" He did not fall in Tarah's fight,
No blood of his the Curragh stains,
Where many a ghost that moans by night
Of foully broken faith complains.

" He triumphed not that fatal day,
When every loyal cheek looked pale,
But heard, like us, with sad dismay,
Of fallen chiefs in Clough's dark vale.

" For, wedded to our Ellen's love,
One house was ours, one hope, one soul:
Though fierce malignant parties strove,
No party rage could love control.

" Though we were sprung from British race,
And his was Erin's early pride,
Yet matched in every loveliest grace,
No priest could e'er their hearts divide.

" What though no yeoman's arms he bore;
'Twas party hate that hope forbad:
What though no martial dress he wore,
That dress no braver bosom clad.

" And had our gallant Bryan Byrne
Been welcomed to their loyal band,
Home might I still in joy return
The proudest father in the land.

" For, ah! when Bryan Byrne was slain,
With him my brave, my beauteous son
His precious life-blood shed in vain;—
The savage work of death was done!" . . . .

He ceased: for now, by memory stung,
His heart's deep wounds all freshly bled,
While with a father's anguish wrung,
He bowed to earth his aged head.

Yet soothing to his broken heart
He felt the stranger's sympathy,
And age is ready to impart
Its page of woe to pity's eye.

Yes! it seemed sweet once more to dwell
On social joys and peaceful days,
And still his darling's virtues tell,
And still his Ellen's beauty praise.

" But say," at length exclaimed the youth,
" Did no one rash, rebellious deed
E'er cloud thy Bryan's loyal truth,
And justice doom thy boy to bleed?"

" No; never rash, rebellious deed
Was his, nor rash rebellious word;
That day of slaughter saw him bleed,
Where blushing Justice dropped the sword.

" In Fury's hand it madly raged,
As urged by fierce revenge she flew;
With unarmed Innocence she waged
Such war as Justice never knew."

" 'Twas ours (the sorrowing father cried),
'Twas ours to mourn the crimes of all:
Each night some loyal brother died;
Each morn beheld some victim fall.

" Oh, 'twas a sad and fearful day
That saw my gallant boys laid low;
The voice of anguish and dismay
Proclaimed full many a widow's woe!

" But doubly o'er our fated house
The accursed hand of murder fell,
And ere our Ellen wept her spouse,
She had a dreadful tale to tell!

" For early on that guilty morn
The voice of horror reached our ears;
That, from their thoughtless slumber torn,
Before a helpless sister's tears,

" Beneath their very mother's sight
Three youthful brothers butchered lie,
Three loyal yeomen brave in fight,
Butchered by savage treachery.

" They were my nephews; boys I loved,
My own brave boys alone more dear;
Their rashness oft my heart reproved,
And marked their daring zeal with fear.

" They were my widowed sister's joy;
Her hope in age and dark distress;
And Ellen loved each gallant boy
Even with a sister's tenderness.

" It was from Ellen's lips I heard
The tidings sadly, surely true:
To me, ere yet the dawn appeared,
All pale with fear and grief she flew.

" Roused by her call, with her I sought
The sad abode of misery:
But to the wretched mother brought
No comfort, but our sympathy.

" On the cold earth, proud Sorrow's throne,
In silent majesty of woe,
She sat, and felt herself alone,
Though loud the increasing tumults grow.

" In throngs the assembled country came,
And every hand was armed with death:
Revenge! revenge! (they all exclaim,)
Spare no suspected traitor's breath:

" No; let not one escape who owns
The faith of Rome, of treachery:
This loyal blood for vengeance groans,
And signal vengeance let there be!

" What, shall we feel the coward blow,
And tamely wait a late defence?
No; let us strike the secret foe,
Even through the breast of innocence!

" Poor Ellen trembled as they raved;
Her pallid cheek forgot its tears;
While from the hand of fury saved,
Her infant darling scarce appears.

" I saw her earnest searching eye,
In that dark moment of alarm,
Ask, in impatient agony,
A brother's dear, protecting arm.

" Woe! bitter woe, to me and mine!
Too well his brave, his feeling heart
Already could her fears divine,
And more than bear a brother's part.

" When the first savage blast he knew
Would bid each deadly bugle roar,
Back to our home of peace he flew:
Ah, home of peace and love no more!

" Oh! would to God that I had died
Beneath my wretched sister's roof!
Thus heaven in mercy had denied
To my worst fears their utmost proof.

" So had these eyes been spared a sight
That wrings my soul with anguish still,
Nor known how much of life, ere night,
The blood-hounds of revenge could spill.

" Sinking at once with fear and age,
Her father's steps my child upheld;
The mangled victims of their rage
Each moment shuddering we beheld.

" Down yon steep side of Carickmure,
Our rugged path we homeward wound;
And saw, at least, that home secure,
'Mid many a smoking ruin round.

" Low in the Glen our cottage lies
Behind yon dusky copse of oak:
On its white walls we fixed our eyes,
But not one word poor Ellen spoke!

" We came .... the clamour scarce was o'er,
The fiends scarce left their work of death:—
But never spoke our Bryan more,
Nor Ellen caught his latest breath.

" Still to the corse by horror joined,
The shrinking infant closely clung,
And fast his little arms intwined,
As round the bleeding neck he hung.

" Oh, sight of horror, sight of woe!
The dead and dying both were there:
One dreadful moment served to show,
For us was nothing but despair.

" Oh, God! even now methinks I see
My dying boy, as there he stood,
And sought with fond anxiety
To hide his gushing wounds of blood,

" Ere life yet left his noble breast,
Gasping, again he tried to speak,
And twice my hand he feebly pressed,
And feebly kissed poor Ellen's cheek.

"No word she spoke, no tear she shed,
Ere at my feet convulsed she fell,
Still lay my children, cold and dead!
And I yet live, the tale to tell!

"She too awoke to wild despair
With frenzied eye each corse to see,
To rave, to smile with frantic air;
But never more to smile for me!

"But hold! from yonder grassy slope
Our orphan darling calls me hence:
Sweet child, last relic of our hope,
Of love and injured innocence.

"Soldier, farewel! To thee should power
Commit the fate of lives obscure,
Remember still in fury's hour
The murdered youths of Glenmalure.

" And chief, if civil broils return,
Though vengeance urge to waste, destroy;
Ah! pause! . . . . think then on Bryan Byrne,
Poor Ellen, and her orphan boy!"

IMITATED FROM JEREMIAH.—Chap. xxxi. v. 15.

Hark, the voice of loud lament
Sounds through Ramah's saddened plain!
There cherished grief, there pining discontent,
And desolation reign.
There, mid her weeping train
See Rachel for her children mourn
Disconsolate, forlorn!
The comforter she will not hear,
And from his soothing strains she hopeless turns her ear.
Daughter of affliction peace,
Let, at last, thy sorrows cease,
Wipe thy sadly streaming eye,
Look up, behold thy children nigh:

Lo! thy vows have all been heard,
See how vainly thou hast feared!
See, from the destroyer's land
Comes the loved, lamented band;
Free from all their conquered foes
Glorious shall they seek repose;
Surest hope for thee remains,
Smile at all thy former pains;
Joy shall with thy children come,
And all thy gladdened bowers shall bloom

HAGAR IN THE DESERT.

Injured, hopeless, faint, and weary,
Sad, indignant, and forlorn,
Through the desert wild and dreary,
Hagar leads the child of scorn.

Who can speak a mother's anguish,
Painted in that tearless eye,
Which beholds her darling languish,
Languish unrelieved, and die.

Lo! the empty pitcher fails her,
Perishing with thirst he lies,
Death with deep despair assails her,
Piteous as for aid he cries.

From the dreadful image flying,
  Wild she rushes from the sight;
In the agonies of dying
  Can she see her soul's delight?

Now bereft of every hope,
  Cast upon the burning ground,
Poor, abandoned soul! look up,
  Mercy have thy sorrows found.

Lo! the Angel of the Lord
  Comes thy great distress to cheer;
Listen to the gracious word,
  See divine relief is near.

"Care of Heaven! though man forsake thee,
  Wherefore vainly dost thou mourn?
From thy dream of woe awake thee,
  To thy rescued child return.

" Lift thine eyes, behold yon fountain,
Sparkling mid those fruitful trees;
Lo! beneath yon sheltering mountain
Smile for thee green bowers of ease.

" In the hour of sore affliction
God hath seen and pitied thee;
Cheer thee in the sweet conviction,
Thou henceforth his care shalt be.

" Be no more by doubts distressed,
Mother of a mighty race!
By contempt no more oppressed,
Thou hast found a resting place."—

Thus from peace and comfort driven,
Thou, poor soul, all desolate,
Hopeless lay, till pitying Heaven
Found thee, in thy abject state.

O'er thy empty pitcher mourning
Mid the desert of the world;
Thus, with shame and anguish burning,
From thy cherished pleasures hurled:

See thy great deliverer nigh,
Calls thee from thy sorrow vain,
Bids thee on his love rely,
Bless the salutary pain.

From thine eyes the mists dispelling,
Lo! the well of life he shews,
In his presence ever dwelling,
Bids thee find thy true repose.

Future prospects rich in blessing
Open to thy hopes secure;
Sure of endless joys possessing,
Of an heavenly kingdom sure.

THE LILY.

May, 1809.

How withered, perished seems the form
Of yon obscure unsightly root!
Yet from the blight of wintry storm,
It hides secure the precious fruit.

The careless eye can find no grace,
No beauty in the scaly folds,
Nor see within the dark embrace
What latent loveliness it holds.

Yet in that bulb, those sapless scales,
The lily wraps her silver vest,
'Till vernal suns and vernal gales
Shall kiss once more her fragrant breast.

Yes, hide beneath the mouldering heap
The undelighting slighted thing;
There in the cold earth buried deep,
In silence let it wait the spring.

Oh! many a stormy night shall close
In gloom upon the barren earth,
While still, in undisturbed repose,
Uninjured lies the future birth;

And Ignorance, with sceptic eye,
Hope's patient smile shall wondering view;
Or mock her fond credulity,
As her soft tears the spot bedew.

Sweet smile of hope, delicious tear!
The sun, the shower indeed shall come;
The promised verdant shoot appear,
And nature bid her blossoms bloom.

And thou, O virgin Queen of Spring!
  Shalt, from thy dark and lowly bed,
Bursting thy green sheath's silken string,
  Unveil thy charms, and perfume shed;

Unfold thy robes of purest white,
  Unsullied from their darksome grave,
And thy soft petals silvery light
  In the mild breeze unfettered wave.

So Faith shall seek the lowly dust
  Where humble Sorrow loves to lie,
And bid her thus her hopes entrust,
  And watch with patient, cheerful eye;

And bear the long, cold, wintry night,
  And bear her own degraded doom,
And wait till Heaven's reviving light,
  Eternal Spring! shall burst the gloom.

SONNET WRITTEN AT WOODSTOCK,

IN THE COUNTY OF KILKENNY,

THE SEAT OF WILLIAM TIGHE.

June 30, 1809.

SWEET, pious Muse! whose chastely graceful form
Delighted oft amid these shades to stray,
To their loved master breathing many a lay
Divinely soothing; oh! be near to charm
For me the languid hours of pain, and warm
This heart depressed with one inspiring ray
From such bright visions as were wont to play
Around his favoured brow, when, to disarm
The soul subduing powers of mortal ill,
Thy soft voice lured him "to his ivyed seat,"
"His classic roses," or "his heathy hill;"
Or by yon "trickling fount" delayed his feet
Beneath his own dear oaks, when, present still,
The melodies of Heaven thou didst unseen repeat.

ON RECEIVING A BRANCH OF MEZEREON WHICH FLOWERED AT WOODSTOCK.

DECEMBER, 1809.

ODOURS of Spring, my sense ye charm
With fragrance premature;
And, mid these days of dark alarm,
Almost to hope allure.
Methinks with purpose soft ye come
To tell of brighter hours,
Of May's blue skies, abundant bloom,
Her sunny gales and showers.

Alas! for me shall May in vain
The powers of life restore;
These eyes that weep and watch in pain
Shall see her charms no more.

No, no, this anguish cannot last!
Beloved friends, adieu!
The bitterness of death were past,
Could I resign but you.

But oh! in every mortal pang
That rends my soul from life,
That soul, which seems on you to hang
Through each convulsive strife,
Even now, with agonizing grasp
Of terror and regret,
To all in life its love would clasp
Clings close and closer yet.

Yet why, immortal, vital spark!
Thus mortally opprest?
Look up, my soul, through prospects dark,
And bid thy terrors rest;

Forget, forego thy earthly part,
Thine heavenly being trust:—
Ah, vain attempt! my coward heart
Still shuddering clings to dust.

Oh ye! who sooth the pangs of death
With love's own patient care,
Still, still retain this fleeting breath,
Still pour the fervent prayer:—
And ye, whose smile must greet my eye
No more, nor voice my ear,
Who breathe for me the tender sigh,
And shed the pitying tear,

Whose kindness (though far far removed)
My grateful thoughts perceive,
Pride of my life, esteemed, beloved,
My last sad claim receive!

Oh! do not quite your friend forget,
Forget alone her faults;
And speak of her with fond regret
Who asks your lingering thoughts.

The concluding poem of this collection was the last ever composed by the author, who expired at the place where it was written, after six years of protracted malady, on the 24th of March, 1810, *in the thirty-seventh year of her age. Her fears of death were perfectly removed before she quitted this scene of trial and suffering; and her spirit departed to a better state of existence, confiding with heavenly joy in the acceptance and love of her Redeemer.*

If on this earth she passed in mortal guise,
A short and painful pilgrimage, shall we
Her sad survivors grieve, that Love divine
Removed her timely to perpetual bliss?—
Thou art not lost!—in chastest song and pure
With us still lives thy virtuous mind, and seems
A beacon for the weary soul, to guide
Her safely through Affection's winding path,
To that eternal mansion gained by thee!

W. T.

NOTES.

Page 251.—Written at Waltrim, the seat of the Reverend M. Sandys, who had lately lost a beloved child.

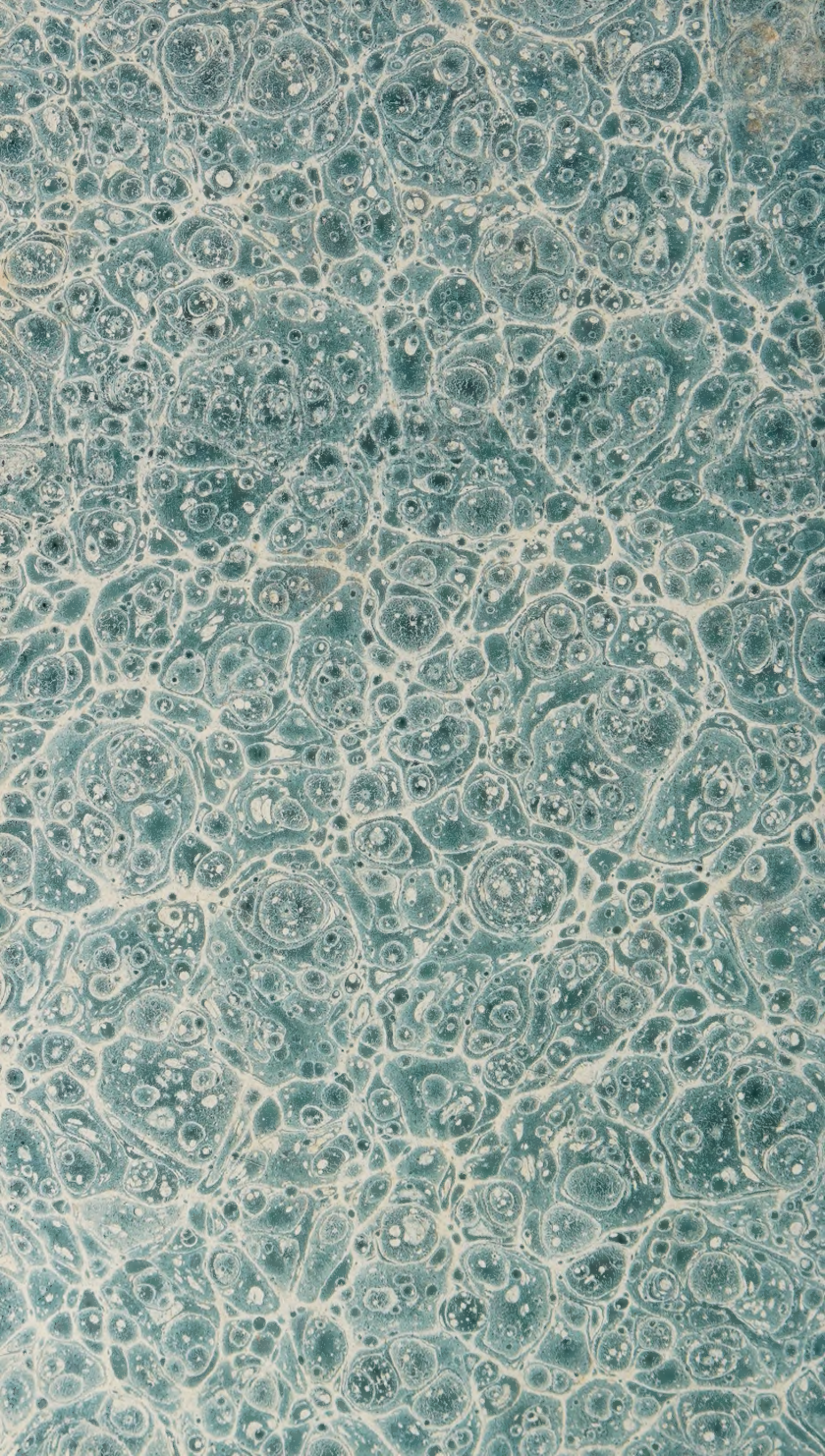
Page 269.—This, with some other poems, belong to a novel written by Mrs. H. Tighe, and which is now in the possession of the editor.

Page 278.—The myrtle was planted by the author's aunt Mary, at West-Aston, the seat of Thomas Acton, esq. in the county of Wicklow. The "beloved brother" was the author's father, the Reverend William Blachford, who died after a very short illness in the meridian

of life, a few months after the birth of his daughter. The myrtle was destroyed by frost in the winter of 1807, notwithstanding the care of Mrs. Acton, who is addressed in this poem by her christian name of Sydney.

Page 281.—The story of Bryan Byrne is founded upon facts which were related to the author in the autumn of 1798: though the circumstances may not have happened in the exact manner which is recorded in the poem, yet it gives but too faithful a picture of the sentiments and conduct of those days. It is certain that at that period several unarmed persons, report says above twenty, were put to death by the troops near Wicklow, to retaliate the murder of many loyalists, and particularly of the three brothers mentioned in this ballad.

Page 283.—Clough, the place at which Colonel Walpole was killed, and his detachment defeated by the rebels.

THE END.

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